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THERE is little genuine improvement in the situation in China. Japan's guarded acceptance of some of the Anglo-American proposals must be interpreted in the light of her obstinate refusal to consider any intervention in Manchuria. The Manchurian question is the touchstone of Japanese sincerity and of the sincerity of the intervening Powers. The bloody operations in Shanghai may yet have good consequences if the League of Nations will only use the opportunity to redeem the weakness of its past policy over the rape of Manchuria. It will be a scandal, impossible to excuse, if it can be said that the signatories to the Kellogg Pact and the Council of the League are prepared to resist effectively one nation's aggressive action only when their own immediate interests are threatened. The world should be beyond that stage of self-regarding, political materialism in which men will rush to the defence of the commercial interests represented by the International Settlement in Shanghai, but leave Manchuria, without effective protest, to go the miserable way to subjugation that has been the lot of Korea.

* * *

There is in this question a real chance for the Opposition to show itself capable of sound, constructive political thought, and we hope no attention will be paid, in the House of Commons or elsewhere, to the efforts to check criticism of Japan because she "is a friendly Power." No such consideration deterred Gladstone from his denunciation of Turkey; and, as Mr. Lansbury retorted to his interrupters, the rule has been gaily broken by anyone who has wished to attack the Soviet Republics. Anyhow, it is an absurd convention; for as the world becomes more of a family, the different members of the family must expect criticism when they misbehave. There is a very naive defence of Japanese conduct in a statement made for the *Times* by Mr. Yoshizawa, the Foreign Minister. He defends his country's recourse to arms as a kind of police action necessary owing to Chinese naughtiness—there was "an insulting article about the Imperial Family in the Kuomintang organ." So the English, during the Boer War, might have bombarded Calais and Boulogne because *La Rire* published insolent caricatures of Queen Victoria! Among Mr. Yoshizawa's more modest demands is one that, "before withdrawing our troops, the safety of our nationals shall be secured by the Chinese withdrawing theirs." Evidently he is quite prepared for the internationalisation of Shanghai but not of Manchuria!

* * *

The opening of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva has naturally been overshadowed by the war-clouds in China. Indeed, the Chairman's inaugural speech on Tuesday was put back for an hour whilst an emergency meeting of the League Council was held.

Mr. Henderson did not deliver an epoch-making oration. How could he—or how could anybody else in his position—have done that? But his speech certainly did not justify the contemptuous comments of the *Times*, which with an odd mixture of malice and meanness suggests that he ought to have said more—and even apparently *done* something—about Shanghai, and girds at him for not proclaiming from the chair his doubts about the success of the Conference! He spoke, in fact, as he usually does, plainly and straightforwardly and with that conviction of the grave issues at stake which is shared by all men of sense and good will. When he said that he "refused to contemplate the possibility of failure," he was not branding himself as a visionary. He knows well enough what are the obstacles to disarmament. But the alternatives are not confined to a hundred per cent. success and a hundred per cent. failure. It is possible that we shall achieve something worth having. The running amok of Japan need not prevent agreements to economise on armaments. It may even result in the Japanese themselves taking a soberer view of the advantages to be gained by war.

* * *

It was ironic enough that it should fall to Mr. Sato, the Japanese delegate, to present the League's comments upon Polish behaviour in the Ukraine. Japan is not in a happy position when it comes to a discussion of problems of international obligation. But the facts were overwhelming and the Polish defence the flimsiest of special pleading. As a result Poland has been found guilty by the Council: nothing in its opinion—nor in the opinion of any non-Polish observer—had been done by the Ukrainian nationalist movement to justify Poland in flogging Ukrainian peasants and destroying their property. Poland declared that she had since punished some of her over-zealous police, which the Council accepted as all to the good. But Lord Cecil, who has played an excellent part in this matter, and the whole Council with him, regretted that the Polish Government "had not felt able to grant compensation to the innocent elements of the population which had been the victims of abuses." So far, so good. Poland stands rebuked. But what difference will it make to Polish policy? To be explicit, will Poland withdraw the two Bills now being presented in her legislature, one of which aims a blow at the heart of Ukrainian education, while the other proposes to "colonise" Ukrainian districts with Polish ex-soldiers? It is better than nothing that the Council should have come down on the right side: but the whole issue of Home Rule, promised to the Ukraine, has again been passed over. Nothing has been exacted from the Poles except vague and probably worthless promises.

* * *

Mr. Chamberlain was short and plain on Tuesday in his statement about the reparations question. The British Government wants a general cancellation of reparations and war debts; but that obviously cannot be had now, and they pin their hopes to a Conference in May or June, when "the conditions may be more favourable for a permanent settlement." Everybody expects a big swing to the Left at the French General Election—some even talk of a majority for M. Léon Blum, or at any rate for a policy in which Socialists and the less Germanophobe Radicals would agree. The original idea was to hold the elections in April, but it seems now that they will be postponed till late in May, so as to follow the elections in Prussia. There, it is hoped by the French Conservatives, the Nazis will be successful, and this will frighten the electors of France into renewing their support of the Right. How much importance is to be attached to these manœuvres is not yet clear.

* * *

Mr. Lang has defaulted; and there has been for the moment a fairly sharp fall in the value of Australian securities. Mr. Lyons, however, repudiates Mr. Lang's policy, and since the Commonwealth Government is bound by agreement to make good the New South Wales default, the bondholders will probably get their money after all. The result of Mr. Lang's action will indeed be felt more in Australia than here; its chief effect will be to provide a first-class crisis between the Governments of the Commonwealth and of New South Wales. Yet it is not surprising that Australian stocks generally have fallen in value; for from the standpoint of bondholders it is obviously a dangerous thing to have default publicly talked about and preached in influential quarters as a way for debtor countries out of their troubles. So far the world crisis has caused singularly few defaults on fixed interest-bearing securities in any part of the world. This is partly because the depreciation of sterling has reduced the real burden on the debtors, but also because world finance is now so integrated that great efforts have been made to stop the outbreak of an obviously contagious disease. If the world slump lasts much longer, these efforts can hardly continue to succeed; and Mr. Lang's policy is likely to find a growing body of adherents. But countries like Australia, which will need to borrow again heavily before long, will not default if they can possibly help it. Bondholders need not as yet be much alarmed.

* * *

The report that 106 American religious leaders have cabled the Prime Minister "appealing for the release of Mr. Gandhi and for co-operation for the solution of the Indian problem," has caused some rather natural irritation in this country. The authors of angry letters to the papers have pointed out that there has never been a time when Americans—whether "religious leaders" or just plain men and women—had better reason to attend to their own affairs. America is not making a conspicuous success of any governmental enterprise—neither the city of New York, nor the islands of Hawaii, nor the nation as a whole—so it would not seem the right moment for them to take on the governing of the Indian Empire. However, the English should realise that they have only themselves to blame for the bad press their Indian policy has in the United States. The American reporters who are sent to India do not go with any anti-British feelings; but they rapidly acquire such feelings. For the English civil servants still appear to regard reporters as mere impertinent intruders who should be put in their places—and being put in your place by an English official is not an endearing experience. Having been thwarted, and probably annoyed, by the English, the reporters

then turn to Gandhi, and that keen-witted saint receives them affably and talks at length about his hopes and plans, and is quite willing to be photographed eating nuts and wearing chiefly spectacles. Naturally, Gandhi gets a splendid press in America, and the English Government a bad one. This is a state of affairs that could easily be remedied. It would not be necessary for the English officials to eat nuts if they would merely learn to be more gracious, it would suffice.

* * *

The tariff session of Parliament has begun, and conflicting rumours have been running round about the preferences which would be given to the Colonies and which would or would not be given to the Dominions. The crowded Government benches are all hungry for their meal and quite unwilling to pay any serious attention to arguments on the free-trade side. The position of Sir Herbert Samuel and the other dissentient ministers is lightly passed over: it looks well to pretend that National Government is different from Conservative Government, and if the Liberals are prepared to aid that pretence, why should the Conservatives who are getting what they want, or at least a big instalment of it, be over-critical? So the Opposition's vote of censure is treated with contempt and the Prime Minister's rebuff to Mr. Lansbury was thoroughly appreciated as a good joke. Mr. Lansbury thought that a vote of censure on the Government for unnecessarily introducing a far-reaching Constitutional innovation ought to precede the acceptance of that innovation in practice, and that, since tariffs are condemned in the vote of censure, that vote should come before the introduction of the Tariff Bill. But Mr. MacDonald's reply was to give time for the vote after the Tariff Bill. The fact is that the National Government has destroyed not only the collective responsibility of the Cabinet, but also effective Parliamentary Government in this country.

* * *

The Town and Country Planning Bill got its second reading practically without opposition in the House of Commons this week. It is virtually the Bill that Mr. Greenwood introduced on behalf of the Labour Government. One of the few really national and non-party causes is the preservation of the countryside and the proper control of urban development. It is ridiculous that the urban authorities, which have town-planning powers, should have possessed hitherto no control at all over areas already built over; and it is hardly less ridiculous that we should have waited till now to apply even such powers as did exist to rural as well as urban areas. The proposed "betterment" charges again, while they have been lowered from 100 to 75 per cent. of the improvement in value, are obviously on the right lines, and do represent a small beginning of the effective socialisation of one indefensible form of unearned increment. Of course, even if the Bill passes unspoilt, its powers are only permissive, and its real value will depend on the use made of it by the local authorities. But it will at least provide them with the means of coping with such nuisances as ribbon development, the erection of unsightly buildings, and the destruction of historic monuments. The National Government is wise in adopting its predecessor's Bill.

The repayment of £30,000,000 to France and America has made the position of the London money market a good deal healthier—the more so because it has been carried through at a time when French short-term balances in London were also being reduced. Sterling has now been for some time reasonably stable; and the alarms of last autumn are a good deal less violent than they were. This is partly because the situation is really easier for the time being, but far more because the absurd exaggeration of last autumn's panic has now been widely realised. Yet we are by no means out of the wood. Our temporary ease is largely dependent on the export of gold from India, without which we could certainly not have made this week's repayment. There is still to come the repayment of the much larger sum of £80,000,000 at par which the Government borrowed in its final and ill-advised attempt to remain on the gold standard. As long as this remains unpaid, and there are also large French balances that may be withdrawn from London at any time, sterling cannot have an assured stable value, even apart from the danger to it from a tariff policy calculated to force up the level of British prices. The repayment of the £30,000,000 was an excellent, and a welcome, gesture of strength; but the £80,000,000 still owing is likely to cause us a good deal more trouble, unless gold continues to come from India even on an increasing scale.

* * *

The case of Mr. Kumleben seems likely to become a classic example of the abuse of arbitrary authority by petty officials. That at least is the interpretation we hope to learn is the true one. Consider the facts as far as we know them. Mr. Kumleben, the Paris correspondent of a German newspaper, and a man with many friends and a considerable journalistic connection in this country, was asked by some friends to spend the week-end in Kent and to address two meetings. The audience was to consist of Quakers, W.E.A. and Adult School students. At Newhaven he was prevented from landing and searched by immigration officers who showed disgust at his having in his possession cuttings from the *Manchester Guardian* and from German newspapers. There seems to have been no accusation of communism, and indeed we are assured that Mr. Kumleben is not even tinged with communism. The authorities then said he had not sufficient money and when that pretence failed, shipped him back to France with the explanation (according to Mr. Kumleben's own account) that "we think the English themselves know what is good for them to do, and there is no need for people from other countries to come and tell them." The treatment of foreigners landing in this country has been a scandal ever since the war. In this case it seems difficult to allege either the usual reason for preventing entry—that the entrant might add to the unemployed—or to sustain the usually secret reason that the political views of the foreigner are objectionable. Unless, of course, all non-National Government views have become liable to deportation. Mr. Kumleben was coming at our invitation to spend a week-end and to speak about international affairs in England. Why, please, should he not do so? Will the Home Office kindly tell us?

THE LESSON OF SHANGHAI

THE bombing of Shanghai has forced Great Britain and the United States to act in the way in which the League of Nations ought to have acted when Japan first invaded Manchuria. Yet no new principle is involved. When Japan began her military operations in Manchuria the intention of her policy and the world issues it raised were perfectly obvious. Her war-lords had learnt the ways of Western States. On the approved pattern of Western Imperialism they hoped to extend the Japanese Empire at the expense of a weak neighbour. They found, as Powers have always found in similar circumstances, real or fictitious grievances which would serve to excuse activities which, according to the precedents of *real-politik*, needed no excuse beyond that of self-interest. The chief difference between Japan's conquest of Manchuria and Great Britain's conquest of the Transvaal, for instance, is that since the last war the nations, including Japan, have formally pledged themselves not to make or permit such conquests in the future. They have all solemnly pledged themselves not to use war as an instrument of policy, not to violate the territory of other nations, to submit disputes to arbitration, and, in the event of one Power doing these things, to prevent that Power from profiting by her breach of faith. Once the war party in Japan had got into the saddle and induced Japan to break her pledges, the main question before the world was whether the other Powers would keep their pledges. The event proved that they would not. China, which had put her case unreservedly in the hands of the League, was treated with cynical indifference, and Japan's "international piracy" —to use Mr. Lansbury's unparliamentary but accurate description—was covered over with pitiful excuses and sanctimonious phrases.

Why, then, have the Powers suddenly changed their minds? Why has the blatant support of Japanese aggression in Conservative newspapers suddenly turned into a solemn warning to Japan to be careful? Let Mr. Garvin, the naive and faithful interpreter of old-fashioned nationalism, speak for the rest. As long as Japan confined her operations to occupying Chinese territory and killing Chinese people in Manchuria, he was, as he carefully explains, opposed to all interference. Indeed, he approved of her policy. But when Japan bombs Shanghai, and even drops bombs into the International Settlement, in which American, British and other Europeans reside, he decides that "this will not do. . . . Japan has gone too far." Too far—as far, that is, as British and American interests. Mr. Garvin in these phrases precisely explains the policy of the Powers. Having failed to act as a League, they may, as individual States with interests to protect, co-operate in calling Japan to book. If that is all, we are back at the old diplomacy, back where we were in 1914.

If Japan is now prevented from further acts of aggression, if war ceases in China, that will be much. Thousands of Chinese lives will have been lost which resolute League action a few weeks ago could have saved; still, if war is checked now, that will be something to be thankful for. But if that is all, the greatest opportunity of vindicating the new idea of substituting an international law for the rule of anarchy among States will still have been missed. If the Powers, acting apart from the League, merely prevent Japan from extending her operations in parts of China in which Western interests are involved, leaving her to boast of the conquest of Manchuria, a terrible precedent will have been established. Her war-lords will see that they have overstepped the mark; they will withdraw for the moment, but they and their kind, in every country which still cherishes imperialistic aims, will merely wait their next opportunity, knowing that they can safely flout the League whenever they desire.

But there is still, if our statesmen prove less weak than they seem to be, a chance of recovering much lost ground. Though it is the United States and Great Britain which are effective at the moment, the machinery of the League, and the organised opinion which supports the League, are still in existence. In pre-war diplomacy the world would scarcely have known the contents of the Notes now passing between Washington, London, Paris and Tokyo. But to-day, when Mr. Thomas at Geneva announces the demands sent to the Japanese Government, he speaks, not only for the British Government, but for all the smaller States of Europe and for an organised public opinion. When the Powers truckled to Japanese militarism a few months ago, everyone who understood the issues and desired to outlaw war and end international piracy was dismayed. To-day, if our statesmen have at length understood the lesson of Shanghai, it will again be possible to make something of the League. If they realise that every breach of the Covenant, every war-like act—even one carried out against the Chinese, whom so many Powers have exploited with impunity in the past—does necessarily involve the real interests of every other nation; if, in short, they have been at length bumped out of their complacent nationalism and made to discover that these phrases about international co-operation and the necessity for the peaceful settlement of disputes are not merely fine phrases which can be safely neglected, then the mistake of the Japanese war-lords in "going too far" may have some useful results. The test is a simple one. If the Powers wish to show that they mean anything by their pledges, if they wish at all to reinstate the League as a world-force, they must insist that Japan not only ceases acts of aggression in Shanghai and Nanking, but that she also gives up the territory she has stolen in Manchuria.

There is no reason except lack of courage why this should not happen. The withdrawal of the Admiral who has been responsible for Japan's recent operations and the substitution of Admiral Nomura, who is described by informed Americans as the best possible choice, suggests that Japan has at length realised that "she has gone too far," that she has, in fact, outraged decent opinion everywhere as well as alarmed the governments of the Great Powers. The reply to the demands addressed to her by Great Britain and the United States are not, as we write, at all satisfactory. She promises to withdraw if China withdraws—which is all right unless the rudeness of a Chinese newspaper or the violence of a few Chinese students is considered sufficient to justify renewed hostilities. But far more important is the Japanese effort to draw a distinction

between the issue in Manchuria and Shanghai. Japan's claim that she is alone concerned in Manchuria must be scotched at once. We are all interested, not only because we stand pledged not to permit such acts of aggression, but also because as long as Japan is in Manchuria there can be no real peace in the East. If the League takes up the Manchurian question in a new spirit with the knowledge that we and the United States are determined that Japan shall give up her lawless gains, Japan must, in fact, give way. There will be no need to use the economic sanction to which the League and the United States could in the last resort have recourse with overwhelming effect.

THE MEANS TEST

THE "Means Test" has now been in operation for three months, and the results amply justify the fears that we expressed at the start. There was, no doubt, a case alike on grounds of economy and of principle for overhauling the system of transitional benefit. But the method adopted by the National Government was extraordinarily ill-advised. It mixes up poor law relief and unemployment benefit. It overburdens and irritates the local authorities, and it produces week by week up and down the country a rich crop of anomalies, injustices and bitterness. Of course, it will save some money to the taxpayer, and it will remedy some abuses. But money could have been saved and abuses remedied by a less objectionable system.

Full statistics are not yet available; but the Minister of Labour stated in the House of Commons on Tuesday that up to the middle of January about 1,000,000 applicants for transitional benefit had been dealt with by the Public Assistance Committees, and 1,629,000 determinations had been made. (The determinations are a larger number than the applicants, because each case must be reviewed at least every four weeks.) In 802,339 of the 1,629,000 cases the standard rate of benefit had been allowed, in 570,721 reduced rates, and in 255,949 no benefit at all. These proportions will be found to vary considerably in different areas, we think, when all the separate local figures are published. Such as we have been able to collect ourselves show that the totally rejected claims are sometimes in the neighbourhood of 30 per cent.—e.g., at Bradford and Leeds (up to December 8th) and in London (for the first 12,000 applicants); in the West Riding it was 15 per cent., whilst full benefit was given to 64 per cent. and reduced rates to 21 per cent. Variations of this sort, however, do not in themselves reveal the true mischief; that can only be discovered by examining the individual cases and the policies and methods of the local authorities.

There is, fortunately—or unfortunately—no lack of information on any of these heads. Every Public Assistance Committee has a wide discretion in computing the needs of applicants. It may be strict or lax, stingy or generous, according to the social or moral or economic or political views of the majority of its members. Its determinations may even vary with the state of its temper or its liver. It is subject to a very few limitations laid down by statute or by the Ministry of Labour acting under the Order in Council. Thus 7s. 6d. of national health insurance benefit and five shillings' worth of friendly society's sickness benefit must be excluded in estimating a man's means. But outside this there are doubts and difficulties about investments, house property, compensation allowances, old age pensions, disability pensions. Are the Public Assistance Committees to ignore these, or to reckon them in wholly or in part? Some take one line, some another. At West Hartlepool it is, or was, the practice to ignore at least 7s. 6d. of a disability pension. At Liverpool it was proposed that disability pensions should be completely disregarded; but both the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health pointed out that this would not be in conformity with the Order in Council. In such a state of affairs, it is inevitable that there should be glaring differences of treatment and widespread heartburning. Here an applicant is forced to realise all his savings, there he is allowed to keep them. In some cases, it is alleged, people are made to sell personal valuables. Nor is there any uniformity about the deductions made from earnings for an odd day's work which an applicant may get. Some Committees take off one-sixth, others as much as 12s.

Nor is this all. It is not merely that A, B, and C, who are in exactly similar circumstances, are assessed at different rates. The strongest objection is taken to the methods by which the assessments are arrived at. The "transitionals" are not, in theory, ordinary poor law cases and they are not ordinary unemployed. They are neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. But, in fact, they are generally treated as though they were ordinary poor law cases. The Order in Council requires the Public Assistance Committees "to make such inquiries, and otherwise to deal with the case, as if they were estimating the need of an unemployed, able-bodied person who had applied for public assistance." That means that the unemployed are visited and inspected and catechised by the relieving officer and his assistants, subjected in short to all the rigorous testing which it is the duty (and sometimes, we fear, the pleasure) of these officials to carry out. There are spongers and rascals among the unemployed, as there are in other sections of society, on whom no sympathy need be wasted. But it is monstrous to pretend that these are anything but a minority, and it shows a deplorable want of imagination to suppose that the great mass of honest workers, out of employment through no fault of their own, will not resent the inquisition of the poor law.

We are told by some of the champions of the scheme that such a scrutiny is no more than what any citizen who pays income tax is liable to. But that is plain nonsense. The attentions of H.M. Inspector of Taxes, disagreeable as they may be to most of us, do not include domiciliary visits, cross-examinations of ourselves and our households, and other dodges for extracting information or applying pressure which may be used on the unemployed poor—and are being used in some instances in what seems to us a scandalous manner. Not only are larger contributions towards the support of unemployed persons being required from relatives who are living with them, but attempts are made to extend this responsibility to sons and daughters, and even more distant relations, fifty or a hundred or two hundred miles away. The Minister of Labour will, no doubt, say that he cannot be held answerable for misguided zeal on the part of local authorities. True; but that does not alter the fact that the system allows, and indeed invites, this sort of zeal. Nor will false analogies between the means test and the income-tax forms placate the hundreds of thousands of workmen who resent the indignities to which they are subjected.

Many of the criticisms that we have made were voiced a day or two ago by a deputation of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to the Minister of Labour. And many others could be made, and are being made, by the local authorities on whom this ungrateful task has been thrust. It is not their fault that they are making a mess of it. Their proper function is to administer relief to the destitute from the rates; they are now compelled to act as agents for the central Government, without clear guidance or instructions, and they are put to a heavy strain, even with the extra staffs that they have had to take on. The great majority of them, we believe, will share in the general rejoicing with which the abolition of this means test will be received—for abolished in its present form it must surely be. It has few defenders to-day, and it will have fewer still after six months. The Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance will report before long, and we shall be very

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If Japan is now prevented from further acts of aggression, if war ceases in China, that will be much. Thousands of Chinese lives will have been lost which resolute League action a few weeks ago could have saved; still, if war is checked now, that will be something to be thankful for. But if that is all, the greatest opportunity of vindicating the new idea of substituting an international law for the rule of anarchy among States will still have been missed. If the Powers, acting apart from the League, merely prevent Japan from extending her operations in parts of China in which Western interests are involved, leaving her to boast of the conquest of Manchuria, a terrible precedent will have been established. Her war-lords will see that they have overstepped the mark; they will withdraw for the moment, but they and their kind, in every country which still cherishes imperialistic aims, will merely wait their next opportunity, knowing that they can safely flout the League whenever they desire.

But there is still, if our statesmen prove less weak than they seem to be, a chance of recovering much lost ground. Though it is the United States and Great Britain which are effective at the moment, the machinery of the League, and the organised opinion which supports the League, are still in existence. In pre-war diplomacy the world would scarcely have known the contents of the Notes now passing between Washington, London, Paris and Tokyo. But to-day, when Mr. Thomas at Geneva announces the demands sent to the Japanese Government, he speaks, not only for the British Government, but for all the smaller States of Europe and for an organised public opinion. When the Powers truckled to Japanese militarism a few months ago, everyone who understood the issues and desired to outlaw war and end international piracy was dismayed. To-day, if our statesmen have at length understood the lesson of Shanghai, it will again be possible to make something of the League. If they realise that every breach of the Covenant, every war-like act—even one carried out against the Chinese, whom so many Powers have exploited with impunity in the past—does necessarily involve the real interests of every other nation; if, in short, they have been at length bumped out of their complacent nationalism and made to discover that these phrases about international co-operation and the necessity for the peaceful settlement of disputes are not merely fine phrases which can be safely neglected, then the mistake of the Japanese war-lords in "going too far" may have some useful results. The test is a simple one. If the Powers wish to show that they mean anything by their pledges, if they wish at all to reinstate the League as a world-force, they must insist that Japan not only ceases acts of aggression in Shanghai and Nanking, but that she also gives up the territory she has stolen in Manchuria.

There is no reason except lack of courage why this should not happen. The withdrawal of the Admiral who has been responsible for Japan's recent operations and the substitution of Admiral Nomura, who is described by informed Americans as the best possible choice, suggests that Japan has at length realised that "she has gone too far," that she has, in fact, outraged decent opinion everywhere as well as alarmed the governments of the Great Powers. The reply to the demands addressed to her by Great Britain and the United States are not, as we write, at all satisfactory. She promises to withdraw if China withdraws—which is all right unless the rudeness of a Chinese newspaper or the violence of a few Chinese students is considered sufficient to justify renewed hostilities. But far more important is the Japanese effort to draw a distinction

between the issue in Manchuria and Shanghai. Japan's claim that she is alone concerned in Manchuria must be scotched at once. We are all interested, not only because we stand pledged not to permit such acts of aggression, but also because as long as Japan is in Manchuria there can be no real peace in the East. If the League takes up the Manchurian question in a new spirit with the knowledge that we and the United States are determined that Japan shall give up her lawless gains, Japan must, in fact, give way. There will be no need to use the economic sanction to which the League and the United States could in the last resort have recourse with overwhelming effect.

THE MEANS TEST

THE "Means Test" has now been in operation for three months, and the results amply justify the fears that we expressed at the start. There was, no doubt, a case alike on grounds of economy and of principle for overhauling the system of transitional benefit. But the method adopted by the National Government was extraordinarily ill-advised. It mixes up poor law relief and unemployment benefit. It overburdens and irritates the local authorities, and it produces week by week up and down the country a rich crop of anomalies, injustices and bitterness. Of course, it will save some money to the taxpayer, and it will remedy some abuses. But money could have been saved and abuses remedied by a less objectionable system.

Full statistics are not yet available; but the Minister of Labour stated in the House of Commons on Tuesday that up to the middle of January about 1,000,000 applicants for transitional benefit had been dealt with by the Public Assistance Committees, and 1,629,000 determinations had been made. (The determinations are a larger number than the applicants, because each case must be reviewed at least every four weeks.) In 802,339 of the 1,629,000 cases the standard rate of benefit had been allowed, in 570,721 reduced rates, and in 255,949 no benefit at all. These proportions will be found to vary considerably in different areas, we think, when all the separate local figures are published. Such as we have been able to collect ourselves show that the totally rejected claims are sometimes in the neighbourhood of 30 per cent.—e.g., at Bradford and Leeds (up to December 8th) and in London (for the first 12,000 applicants); in the West Riding it was 15 per cent., whilst full benefit was given to 64 per cent. and reduced rates to 21 per cent. Variations of this sort, however, do not in themselves reveal the true mischief; that can only be discovered by examining the individual cases and the policies and methods of the local authorities.

There is, fortunately—or unfortunately—no lack of information on any of these heads. Every Public Assistance Committee has a wide discretion in computing the needs of applicants. It may be strict or lax, stingy or generous, according to the social or moral or economic or political views of the majority of its members. Its determinations may even vary with the state of its temper or its liver. It is subject to a very few limitations laid down by statute or by the Ministry of Labour acting under the Order in Council. Thus 7s. 6d. of national health insurance benefit and five shillings' worth of friendly society's sickness benefit must be excluded in estimating a man's means. But outside this there are doubts and difficulties about investments, house property, compensation allowances, old age pensions, disability pensions. Are the Public Assistance Committees to ignore these, or to reckon them in wholly or in part? Some take one line, some another. At West Hartlepool it is, or was, the practice to ignore at least 7s. 6d. of a disability pension. At Liverpool it was proposed that disability pensions should be completely disregarded; but both the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Health pointed out that this would not be in conformity with the Order in Council. In such a state of affairs, it is inevitable that there should be glaring differences of treatment and widespread heartburning. Here an applicant is forced to realise all his savings, there he is allowed to keep them. In some cases, it is alleged, people are made to sell personal valuables. Nor is there any uniformity about the deductions made from earnings for an odd day's work which an applicant may get. Some Committees take off one-sixth, others as much as 12s.

Nor is this all. It is not merely that A, B, and C, who are in exactly similar circumstances, are assessed at different rates. The strongest objection is taken to the methods by which the assessments are arrived at. The "transitionals" are not, in theory, ordinary poor law cases and they are not ordinary unemployed. They are neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring. But, in fact, they are generally treated as though they were ordinary poor law cases. The Order in Council requires the Public Assistance Committees "to make such inquiries, and otherwise to deal with the case, as if they were estimating the need of an unemployed, able-bodied person who had applied for public assistance." That means that the unemployed are visited and inspected and catechised by the relieving officer and his assistants, subjected in short to all the rigorous testing which it is the duty (and sometimes, we fear, the pleasure) of these officials to carry out. There are spongers and rascals among the unemployed, as there are in other sections of society, on whom no sympathy need be wasted. But it is monstrous to pretend that these are anything but a minority, and it shows a deplorable want of imagination to suppose that the great mass of honest workers, out of employment through no fault of their own, will not resent the inquisition of the poor law.

We are told by some of the champions of the scheme that such a scrutiny is no more than what any citizen who pays income tax is liable to. But that is plain nonsense. The attentions of H.M. Inspector of Taxes, disagreeable as they may be to most of us, do not include domiciliary visits, cross-examinations of ourselves and our households, and other dodges for extracting information or applying pressure which may be used on the unemployed poor—and are being used in some instances in what seems to us a scandalous manner. Not only are larger contributions towards the support of unemployed persons being required from relatives who are living with them, but attempts are made to extend this responsibility to sons and daughters, and even more distant relations, fifty or a hundred or two hundred miles away. The Minister of Labour will, no doubt, say that he cannot be held answerable for misguided zeal on the part of local authorities. True; but that does not alter the fact that the system allows, and indeed invites, this sort of zeal. Nor will false analogies between the means test and the income-tax forms placate the hundreds of thousands of workmen who resent the indignities to which they are subjected.

Many of the criticisms that we have made were voiced a day or two ago by a deputation of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to the Minister of Labour. And many others could be made, and are being made, by the local authorities on whom this ungrateful task has been thrust. It is not their fault that they are making a mess of it. Their proper function is to administer relief to the destitute from the rates; they are now compelled to act as agents for the central Government, without clear guidance or instructions, and they are put to a heavy strain, even with the extra staffs that they have had to take on. The great majority of them, we believe, will share in the general rejoicing with which the abolition of this means test will be received—for abolished in its present form it must surely be. It has few defenders to-day, and it will have fewer still after six months. The Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance will report before long, and we shall be very

surprised if it recommends a continuance of this absurdity. Some means test evidently must be admitted—some system, that is to say, of assessing the needs of the unemployed who have not a full claim on the insurance fund—for those who oppose the present scheme are not all champions of unconditional doles. But a simpler and fairer method of administration must be devised. Perhaps the Government already has one in preparation. If it has not, its ears are at last open to suggestions; the Prime Minister, in a speech to his constituents last week, went as near as he ever goes to a pledge on that point.

A LONDON DIARY

ONE often hears general complaints against British industrialists and manufacturers and their refusal to attempt to meet the requirements of potential customers. I have just come across a particular case which shows that the complaints are not entirely unjustified. I had the opportunity of seeing a new and very large enterprise whose operations cover a number of different industries, and which is requiring the installation of a considerable variety of machines. Much of the new machinery was foreign and the promoter of the enterprise told me that he simply could not get what he wanted from the English manufacturers. If what he wanted was not exactly what they had made since the days of the first steam engine, they took no further interest in his inquiry. The Belgian firm on the other hand, which had got his last order, showed that they thought only of trying to meet his particular requirements and, unlike many of the British firms, when they promised delivery by a certain date, kept their promise to the day. In one particular process which is comparatively new, he applied to an English firm who put every kind of difficulty in the way of his giving an order. When he applied to a German firm, they laid themselves out to give him exactly what he wanted and offered to send a skilled operator for a week at their expense in order to train his men and see that everything ran satisfactorily. If this is the attitude of the British manufacturer to-day, what will it be when he feels himself quite safe to defy his customer behind the tariff wall?

* * *

Talking of protection reminds me of the Albert Memorial, which I have known intimately since my childhood, but which I had not examined with any great care for many years. The other Sunday I happened to be walking past it and thought I would mount the steps and see once more the figures of the illustrious dead which are sculpted all round the pediment. As a patriotic Englishman, I was outraged by the number of foreigners who have been admitted, and as the space is necessarily limited, many famous Englishmen have been ousted. French painters like Géricault and Delacroix are there, trumpery Italians, and a whole swarm of Germans, and foreigners whose names were so unfamiliar to me that I did not know whether they were painters, sculptors, writers, or musicians. The anti-British bias is carried so far that, though nearly all our greatest poets are excluded, Michael Angelo occurs twice. Here is a case in which the National Government might justifiably interfere through the Home Secretary. At least half these foreigners ought to be deported and their places taken by such eminent British writers as Donne, Pope, Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Hardy, and Mr. Rudyard Kipling. The expense need not be great, for the likenesses are not in fact very good, and by carefully selecting a foreigner who resembles the exeluded Englishman, and relabelling him with the Englishman's name, the trick would be done. By the by, there is another reform which I think ought to be carried out in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. The very ugly and annoying low, black iron railings, which serve no useful purpose, should all be removed. It would enormously improve the look of the gardens.

In attacking Sir William Beveridge's B.B.C. questionnaire on "Changes in Family Life," several newspapers have declared that it is a shocking inquisition into private affairs. One evening paper went so far as to say that it resembled "a police card-index system on the Continent." A police card-index system which was (*a*) purely voluntary—indeed, you have to apply for one of these forms if you want to get tabulated—and (*b*) which was, if you preferred, anonymous, would be an odd affair. One can see the police issuing the form.

DEAR MR. CHARLES PEACE,

We have, at Scotland Yard, a form which for scientific interest we should be glad if you would care to fill in. We should like to know where you met your wife, whether you are still living with her, how long you kept your first job, and other points of sociological interest. If you care to apply for the form we will send it post free. You need not enclose your name (or finger-prints) with the form unless you desire.—Yours, etc.,

pp. THE C.I.D.

* * *

The attack is, of course, a fizzle. Once it was discovered that no one was to have the form thrust upon him, and that the cost was not being borne by the B.B.C., but by the London School of Economics, there was really nothing more to say. But I expect to see a good deal more controversy of a different kind over Sir William's questionnaire. For there is such a thing as a statistical habit, an academic collection of facts which often leads in the United States to the publication of pseudo-scientific books which are more comic than scientific or useful. The main object of Sir William's questions—to show how far and in what ways our marriage and family habits are changing—is certainly interesting. But we hope that Sir William will explain in rather more detail why some sections—especially the "Where did you meet your wife" section—are really important. In general we can already guess that the family circle and the influence of parents play a smaller part in the arrangement of marriages to-day than they used to do. But supposing Sir William discovers that 10,000 people met their wives at the cinema or at tennis clubs, what can he make of the fact? If he had the results of a similar questionnaire carried out twenty years ago, for purposes of comparison, there would be more in it. But perhaps he is thinking of posterity—that in twenty years' time his results will provide interesting material to compare with a later questionnaire?

* * *

I see that Father Martindale is giving a series of Sunday evening talks on Roman Catholic male saints. It is proposed to follow up this series by a second on female Saints. From press announcements it is understood that Father Martindale has been asked by the B.B.C. to give these addresses on condition that he shall refrain from introducing controversial matter. However skilful Father Martindale may be—and I do not doubt that he will be skilful—it is certain that he cannot refrain from assuming values which are held only by Roman Catholics. No one wishes to keep the Catholic point of view from the microphone. But it should be borne in mind that Roman Catholics are apt bitterly to resent any criticism of their tenets on the wireless. It is not so long ago since the Roman Catholic hierarchy took exception to Mr. Bernard Shaw's remarks upon Saint Joan. I hope someone will be given an opportunity of expressing a different point of view about these wonderful stories of mediæval Saints. I believe that the B.B.C. has never yet invited anyone to broadcast a moral case for disbelief.

* * *

There has been during the last few years a more than usually abundant crop of societies of advanced people formed for various purposes of world regeneration. Almost inevitably they are small, and the amount of influence which they exert upon affairs is negligible. And, even when they

exist to further what are practically indistinguishable purposes, they obstinately refuse to co-operate. But the stresses of the times are beginning to affect even the advanced. I was present a few days ago at a meeting of representatives of half-a-dozen such societies, which was called to discuss the possibilities of co-operation, even possibly of amalgamation. The aims of the societies were all found to include such measures as divorce law reform, modification of abortion laws, sterilisation of the feeble-minded, the provision of birth control information at Government clinics, abolition of the censorship of books, plays and films, abolition of restrictions on drink and dress, or rather undress, and a comprehensive series of measures for preserving what is left of the English countryside. All those present believed in Socialism in some form or other, and, although the Douglas scheme popped up as usual, they concurred in desiring an overhaul of the economic system. In international matters the meeting was markedly pacifist (the society which recently protested against the utilisation of amounts paid in income-tax for the provision of armaments was strongly represented). Disestablishment of all State Churches, the secularisation of education and reformed methods of punishment were also included. It is a good first programme. I wonder whether these people can really unite? Anyway, they resolved to set up an organisation for the Co-ordination of Progressive Societies, to which most of the societies present at the meeting have, I understand, since affiliated. I await developments with interest.

* * *

I have just heard a mild and scholarly don arguing that the Japanese have not really broken the Kellogg Pact or the Covenant. He says that the bombing of Shanghai is not an act of war but a remarkable example of the use of "peaceful force." I am reminded of the euphemistic phrase of a friend of mine who, when he was an officer in the Indian police, had to report on a rough show in which he and his men were severely pelted with stones from the roadside. He reported that there had been a little trouble which had involved the use of some "non-violent road metal."

CRITIC.

THROUGH JAPANESE SPECTACLES

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN JAPAN

IN his study of herd-instinct Trotter says that the gravity of a threat to the herd is shown by nothing better than by the activity of rumour. He might have converted the proposition, and said that the prevalence of rumour tends to produce an atmosphere of danger, just as a man walking alone through a wood at night has only to think of lurking presences to be surrounded by them. In time of war it is the business of patriotic papers to do this for the nation at large; and the more popular journalism has become an engine for giving the mob stimulating shocks the more will the methods of the electric eel be required in emergencies.

The Japanese press, while short-circuited by the police on "dangerous" social questions, has not taken long to develop very creditable shock-tactics on other lines. Sex-appeal, as a respectable outlet for youthful irregularities and a cathartic of "dangerous thought" has long enjoyed a bad eminence; but since the beginning of the Manchuria trouble it has been eclipsed by that fine old purge for internal discontents, a good foreign war, with its drums and tramplings, its victories, national heroes and foreign villains, and the alluring prospects of bigger and better things for the future.

It was not for nothing that the first Japanese conquests on the Asiatic mainland were made by an Empress whose name was Jingo. The spirit with which she conquered Korea is only too easily invoked in modern Japan. She should have lived hereafter; for there has certainly been a time for such a word during the last two months, during which every art of "yellowness" has been used to heap abuse on the meddling and ignorant Council of the League of Nations, and to glorify the heroes of conquest without "war." While delegations of schoolgirls go to Manchuria to provide heroes with pocket-handkerchiefs, and are duly photographed at their priest-like task for the picture page of the *Osaka Mainichi*, the boom of Manchurian guns is broadcast, and the leading articles exhaust King Cambyses' vein to describe the misguided body of men who "with few exceptions do not know where Mukden is situated" (Oct. 28th) and who are "persisting in acting as the mouthpiece of the Chinese bandits" (Nov. 14th). When papers roar in this tone it is plain that some substitute for the Bad Uncle in the fairy tales has to be found. The solitary state of the Japanese delegate at the early League meetings had to be accounted for by the machinations of some deep-revolving enemy. At first it was Dr. Sze, whose tongue robbed the Hybla bees and left Mr. Yoshizawa speechless; but the introduction of the American observer needed a greater cause than this. Fortunately, the routine calls of Sir Miles Lampson and Sir Charles Lindley to acquaint the Japanese Foreign Office with the British support of the League's decision provided the necessary inspiration. Lords Reading and Cecil had been "very strong in pushing that resolution forward," and it became clear that in spite of the thirteen votes cast against Japan, "Britain Supporting China" was the correct headline (*Osaka Mainichi*, Oct. 27th). The obvious motive was revenge: there was the Peiping surtax controversy of 1925, and "Baron Shidehara's refusal to co-operate with Britain in sending troops to Shanghai in 1927," besides the Hankow and Kiukiang troubles. Lords Cecil and Reading, Sir Miles and Sir Charles were loyal *ronin*, avenging past injuries according to the best Japanese traditions.

While the *Asahi* took a moderate tone over the affair, the *Osaka Mainichi* (a twin of the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*) now discovered that British prestige was waning, and devoted a leading article to explaining why and how. An immediate effect was produced. Britain herself believed and trembled. The League remained intransigent, it is true. But on November 7th the *Mainichi* reported "Britain Embarrassed by Nippon Allegation: Press Tone Changes." As exhibits it was able to quote not only the *Daily Mail* but also the *Daily Express* "which is just as influential as the world leading papers" (*sic*). To show that the *Mainichi* was not fully placated by even these responsible organs, a parallel column ungraciously observed that "the impression stamped in the minds of the Japanese people cannot be readily erased."

Three days later the game was in full swing once more. "It may be only a rumour, but it is freely asserted that as a reciprocal courtesy in return for the British support, Nanking has promised something to Britain." And by the 13th, "rumour" had become report. Sir Miles Lampson was the Bad Man: the undermining of Japanese trade was his aim. British cotton piece-goods and newsprint were to be duty-free, 5,000 spinning-machines, two dyeworks plants, and paper and artificial silk mills were all to be supplied by Britain on the Boxer Indemnity, the Thordurn case had been settled, a contract for fortification materials for the Yangtse was pending, and, to add insult to injury, Sir Miles had flown in an aeroplane with Dr. Wellington Koo.

At this stage the representative British newspaper, the *Japan Chronicle*, stepped in with a leader entitled "Inventions in the Press," in which "all this" was roundly described as "pure mischief-making," and in which a suggestion was quietly dropped that such a campaign of motive-hunting was hard to reconcile with "a firmly-founded confidence in a good case." This had an immediate effect. On the next day the *English Mainichi* rediscovered British press

support everywhere but in the *News Chronicle* and the *Manchester Guardian*, and the ramp was allowed to peter out.

But the "impression in the mind of the Japanese people" was still there to be played on. An editorial of November 16th asserted that the British Government "practically overrode the Council" (after Chanchun and Chichihar "*practically*" is excellent!), and added that it was "most presumptuous of the League, or Britain for that matter," to mediate. A reflex had been conditioned in the minds of a remarkably suggestible people, and was there to be touched off at will.

On the face of it, a ridiculous newspaper stunt for saving face and stimulating the phagocytes; but no less a sinister comment on the facile and irresponsible power of a certain part of the world's press. The repercussions in some English papers were nearly as absurd and as ill-informed as their cause. The Soviet has had cause enough to complain of the readiness of Japan to pose as a bulwark against Bolshevism. There must have been mirth in Moscow to hear the *Observer* predicting handshakes between the two nations, "in order to place Japan on a self-sufficing basis in Asia."

There is bitter comedy in utterances so near to tragic folly. The needlessness of such purely emotional stimulation is shown by the vastly different tone in which Motoyama Hikoichi, the *Mainichi* President, speaks to the readers of the *Times* and the Scripps-Howard papers. But the dope has served its turn. The spirit of the immortal Jingo (mother of Hachiman, the God of War) is conjured, and the good campaign proceeds.

Those who know the country a little and can see the dangers of over-population combined with a rooted dread of inferiority, and realise the impossibility of immobilising the East at a stage the West left for ever in 1914 are at present not far from despair of any understanding between the two parties. And the task of shedding light is not facilitated by the presence of such go-betweens as the popular papers.

THE RIGHT TO ADVERTISE

ONE of the most surprising features of the current controversy on sky-writing is the surprise of the inventor of the new device at the almost universal objection to his using the night-sky as a background for advertisements. Or, perhaps, this is not so surprising after all. An inventor is naturally proud of the child of his brain and wishes it to perform its tricks to an admiring public. Any of us, having invented an instrument that could write things on the sky, would probably long to exhibit it writing things on the sky. And, as almost all writing, whether on the sky or elsewhere, has to be made to pay for itself, and as the only kind of sky-writing that is likely to pay is the writing of advertisements, what could be more natural than to set the instrument writing advertisements? The instrument, apparently, has other uses in time of war; but as, even under present conditions, we cannot be sure of another European war for some time, it has to be kept in practice during peace-time by putting itself at the service of the great manufacturers and salesmen. Not to use it would seem like burying one's only talent.

And, indeed, if I had invented such a device myself, I could easily persuade myself that to advertise by means of sky-writing is to perform a national service. If, for example, the thrifty citizen were unable to leave his house at night without seeing written up in enormous letters in the sky the sentence, "That bacon at breakfast—was it British?" would not his conscience prick him, as he reflected that in a mean desire to save money he had bought Danish? Would not the Empire Marketing Board jump at such an opportunity to push the sale of Empire produced eggs, apples, tea, lamb, butter, tobacco, and whatever else the Empire produces? If Lord Beaverbrook took over the sky, he could do infinitely more to promote Empire trade than he will ever succeed in doing by talking about tinned milk to farmers. And, as there is no reason in the world why the invention should not be developed into a kind of sky-writing talkie he could make it impossible for any citizen to go out at night without both seeing and hearing the stern imperative, "Be British—Buy British." He would see it in letters of flame; he would hear it in accents of thunder. He would have patriotism rubbed into him till it was in the very marrow of his bones. He would realise, as he had never realised before, that he was a Briton. Is it likely that, after so practical an education in patriotism, he would ever again wish to look at a foreign egg or put up with a foreign tomato?

I wonder, however, whether Major Savage, the inventor of sky-writing, would claim that anyone who invented sky-talking had a right to make other people's lives miserable with it? Probably not. Yet what is the logical difference between the offence of exasperating us through the eye and the offence of exasperating us through the ear? If a man has the right to compel me, whenever I look up at the night-sky, to read that "Barberino Cures Baldness," why should another man be forbidden to shout this at me from the clouds till I believed it? When once we hand over the Heavens to private enterprise, we cannot logically stop any one who chooses to fill the night air above the Wiltshire Downs with bellowings about pills and potions, about cures for sore legs and corns. And, indeed, if we are to have sky-advertising at all, I should on the whole prefer to have it complete with sound accompaniment. It would at least bring things to a head. Either we should get to love sky-advertising or we should be so maddened by it that we should put an end to the thing once and for all.

It is only in the present age that so monstrous a proposal as the proposal to use the sky for advertising could have been seriously entertained by an intelligent man even for two seconds. This fact is not due merely to the growth of invention; it is due largely to the growth of the importance of advertising. Advertising has become of such importance nowadays that it is one of the great national industries; and great national interests are always looking about for new outlets for the spirit of enterprise. Years ago, the landscape as seen from a railway train became a continuous incitement to buy liver pills, lung tonics and condensed milk. If there was an empty field in the middle of a town, it was quickly hidden from view behind a hoarding which told us what whisky, soap and breakfast-food were the best. It is true that the advertiser had to obtain the permission of the owners before he set up the hoardings in their property; but he took it for granted that he had no duty to the public except to call on it to buy the advertised wares. The traveller in the railway-train had no right to see a beautiful landscape from the window as he passed. The inhabitants of a charming street had no right to object to being commanded to buy cheap tea from a hoarding opposite their gates. Public criticism at length induced the advertisers to moderate their claims to dominate the landscape, and in recent years there has been an organised movement to prevent advertisements from clashing with the amenities of the countryside. But now comes a proposal to destroy amenities far more precious than those of the fields that lie along a railway-line. The sky itself is to be turned into a vast advertising sheet, and the heaven's embroidered cloths are to be handed over to the drapers to announce their bargain sales.

It is said that this will never happen on really beautiful starry nights. The new device we are told can project its aphorisms about gin and ginger-ale only on low and murky banks of cloud. It seems to me likely, however, that if sky-writing is permitted, the inventors will before long discover some means of forming smoke-clouds that will serve their purpose, even on the clearest night of stars. It will then be possible to turn the Milky Way into Nestlé's Milky Way, and to announce a cure for rheumatism across Orion's Belt.

It is, I admit, very difficult to argue with anyone who believes in the right to advertise on the sky. The arguments are so obvious, that if he does not see them for himself he will never be persuaded to see them by anybody else. He manifestly does not accept the ordinary view that advertisements can on occasion be out of place and an insult to their surroundings. If this view were not generally accepted, we should have advertisements all through our very Bibles. What a fortune the publishers of the Bible could make by inserting advertisements throughout the book so that one could not turn to the twenty-third Psalm without reading on the opposite page: "Brighto is the Best Boot Polish." The story of Jezebel would be accompanied by an advertisement of face-cream or imitation pearls; and the Book of Job might be interleaved all the way through with the praises of various tonics that cure depression, with inset photographs of famous comedians who had benefited by their use. Every one will see at once that to treat the Bible like this would be an outrage. And the same is true of all great literature. Even an Empire Crusader would not like his copy of Keats's Poems to contain an advertisement of Australian Burgundy on the page opposite the "Ode to a Nightingale." Similarly, advertisements would clearly be out of place on the faces of public buildings. I imagine that the Government would save some of the taxpayers' money by letting out the front of the National Gallery for illuminated signs, but the taxpayer, miserly though he is, prefers to let the money go. Great concerts again could be used to advertise jams, baked beans, and lightning cures for headaches, a megaphone bawling the praises of these things between a song and a symphony. But such things happen only on the wireless in certain countries. And, even there, no one seems to say a good word for them.

If advertisement is incongruous with the arts, then is it not logical to believe that it is equally incongruous with the greatest things in nature—with the sky and the sea, the fields and the forests? That, it seems to me, is one of the few questions to which there are not two sides. The sky is immensely more beautiful than the National Gallery. Obviously, its beauty deserves equal protection. I do not know whom the sky belongs to, but I know that it does not belong to the advertiser. And it never will do so till the day when an advertiser is allowed to burn down the British Museum as an advertisement for So-and-so's Night-lights.

Y.Y.

COMFORT FROM CHINA

HOW comforting for the Chinese
In their unlucky situation,
While bombs and shells from air and seas
Spread round them death and desolation,
To have it made extremely plain
That by no act of war they're slain;
'Tis simply that the Japs maintain
Their preference for direct negotiation!

How comforting for "Member States"
(All deeply pledged to end aggression)
To read each cable that relates
Fresh tales of slaughter and oppression,
And know that there has been, in fact,
No breach of Covenant or Pact,
Such as might call on them to act
And reconcile their practice and profession!

How comforting for *us* to know
That if, to end our toils and pleasures,
A rain of bombs should some day blow
To bits ourselves and household treasures,
It will not be for lack of law,
But that (as at Shanghai we saw)
The line is sometimes hard to draw
'Twixt war and mere precautionary measures!

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

DISARMAMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It is encouraging to learn from Mr. Cameron Fraser what is the general line of undergraduate opinion on Disarmament. Others (whom he terms "elders and betters") have, through the W.I.L. and similar declarations on the subject, been able to gauge the opinion of different sections of the community; and it would be very interesting if some of their experiences could be pooled.

It is disquieting to find, in a working-class district of London, what a strong feeling exists among working men and women in favour of war. Again and again one hears the argument that war means employment, good wages, and plentiful food; and little attention is given to attempts to explain the true economic relation between war and unemployment. There is a crying need for propaganda which will deal with this point, not subtle or highbrow, but plainly and clearly expressed which shall show forcibly that the cost of war is a dead loss of what might have been productively invested in industry.

This attitude is a good deal more serious than the ignorance, indifference, and even crass militarism which invitations for signatures to "Disarmament Declarations" also bring forth. Because very little is being done to meet it, and it is the outcome of real economic necessity. The flag-wagging militarists are not really numerous, though vociferous; and the indifferent can be persuaded, if they will give their time to listen. But the hungry man or woman who believes that war means more food and fewer mouths to share it, is a tougher proposition.

44 Lansdowne Crescent, W.11. M. D. WESTERN.

THE *TIMES* AND THE NAVY LEAGUE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—On Thursday last the *Times* published a letter by Lord Lloyd and Sir Cyril Cobb representing the Navy League, protesting against the present limitations imposed on the British Navy by international agreement and hoping that the present "entanglements" might be discontinued when the present agreement expires in 1936. On Saturday they published an extremely temperate reply by Professor Gilbert Murray representing the League of Nations Union. But note the difference: the first letter was published in the position of honour on the editorial page and in the largest type, the reply was published as part of the ordinary correspondence on an inner page. We must deduce, I suppose, that the *Times* as the leading organ of correct British opinion thinks it more important that the views of the Navy League should receive wide publicity than those of the League of Nations Union. While I was turning over in my mind the significance of this as a commentary on the prospects of the Disarmament Conference, I found in the editorial of the *Observer* on Sunday morning the following words: "This journal has been, and means to remain, a staunch friend to Japan, for whose incredible advance in two generations from chain-armour and bows and arrows to a full development of modern life we have unbounded admiration." This is very reassuring, for I need no longer lament the bias of the *Times* now that the *Observer* has taught me the real meaning of civilisation.

W. B. CURRY,
Headmaster.
The School, Dartington Hall,
Totnes, S. Devon.

THE TRAFFIC IN ARMS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The statement in Miss Woodman's article on "The Manufacture of Armaments" (in your Disarmament Supplement), that the Clergy figure in exceptional numbers as shareholders in armament firms, is of especial interest to me on account of an incident which recently occurred in Hampstead. A Vicar who had had the courage to exhibit League of Nations Union Disarmament posters outside his church was obliged to take them down owing to the protests he received with regard to them from members of his congregation. One wonders whether these members made their protests as Christians, justifying their attitude by the literal interpretation (through inability to grasp the spiritual) of "I come not to bring Peace but the Sword."

Hearing of the support given to the manufacture of armaments by so-called interpreters of Christianity, one cannot but be bitterly reminded of another text: "Where thy Treasure is, there will thy Heart be also"—and wonder whether it may also be applicable to these Christian opposers of Disarmament propaganda in Hampstead. MARGARET FITCH.

29 Rudall Crescent, N.W.3.

THE FIRM HAND IN INDIA

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Few persons who know India personally would advocate to treat the Congress so lightly as Mr. Tilney does in his recent letter. A body which practically paralysed the regular Administration in the country, and came out as effective as before and with added prestige after "firm" rule and repression for a year, must have a much wider following and a stronger basis than what it pleases Mr. Tilney to assume. Whether or not the immediate circumstances in India necessitated the steps taken by the Administration recently, the fact remains that Government in India cannot make a permanent settlement of the Indian problem without including the National Congress in the scheme.

Mr. Tilney observes: "Gandhi is not and never will be a constructive statesman." Similarly many other persons in this country regard Mr. Gandhi as an idealist, impossible, fanatical and (or) madman. But it is obvious that all such opinions proceed from their authors' personal standpoint and are unrelated to the facts of the *whole* case. To all impartial observers Mr. Gandhi stands for much that is just in human relationships and essential to permanent and mutually beneficial relations between India and England. Few people here realise against what odds Mr. Gandhi has to fight within his own ranks, how much blind prejudice and hatred born of a sense of unjust oppression he has to overcome among his own followers and those of the Left-wing. He is not only sincerely peace-loving and humane, but is also the most practical leader of importance India has ever produced. The defect about him, which is the source of a good deal of misunderstanding, is the apparent inconsistency in his utterances, which is the result of the conflict between the ideal and the practical sides of his nature. But when faced with a set of circumstances, he has the capacity and the moral courage to adjust himself in the best practical manner, in spite of his utterances of an idealistic nature.

Whether or not, for practical purposes, Mr. Gandhi can be regarded as representative of India, is a matter of personal opinion. But there is no doubt that he has a far greater following than all the other leaders put together have. C. A. MEHTA.

54 Wavertree Road,
London, S.W.2.

SERIOUSER AND SERIOUSER

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It was a pretty thought to celebrate, as the Government have done, the centenary of the birth of the author of *Alice in Wonderland*. Let us pray that the country will have seen the last of the Premier's fun now that Parliament has once again assembled; for in truth the situation grows "seriouser and seriouser." Much of that seriousness is plain to see, but I have been surprised that no one has sought to disturb the mystery which envelops like a Scottish fog Sir John Gilmour's juggling with the people's bread.

Why, to begin with, Sir John Gilmour, a minor minister of no gifts worth noting? Surely this question of the bread supply of Great Britain is important enough to merit the Premier's personal attention? And why the secrecy, the comings and the goings, the conclaves at the Ministry of Agriculture, the solemn emptiness launched into the press? The public wants to know what is happening. It is rumoured that the proposal is to compel the millers to buy six million quarters of home wheat a year at 15s. extra a quarter. The extortion of that additional £4,500,000 is indeed a sinister enough proposal; but it is not the wheat quota idea as hitherto understood. It is frankly a levy put on the millers to subsidise the farmers because the Government did not dare (at least until last week-end) to set up a tariff on foreign wheat. If the British farmer is to be put on the dole, let us at least do it honestly. BEN TILLETT.

Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.1.

CRUELTY AND THE CIRCUS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Had I for one moment imagined that Mr. Birrell's native wit would not have told him that the spikes on the horse's protective covering could not have been placed where the tiger was supposed to land, I should have dotted the i's and crossed the t's. They were so arranged that had the tiger landed and remained (until he dismounted) anywhere but in the middle of the horse's back he would have suffered the agonies so graphically described by Mr. Birrell.

A certain amount of comment was occasioned by Lord Lonsdale's declaring that these naturally antipathetic animals were lifelong friends, and that the tiger was born in the horse's stable—thus bringing the tiger's mother into this unique family circle. He subsequently wrote me that "the actual accouchement took place next door." But no one has as yet shown the necessity for the presence of the spikes, if the tale of the friendship is true.

The only other point of my previous letter which Mr. Birrell answers is that dealing with the effect on children of professionally trained animal turns, and here I frankly do not understand what he is driving at, for if, as he rightly says, the performer suffers, how can the onlooker have an "excellent state of mind," if he finds pleasure in the performance? Here, ignorance can hardly be termed "excellent." There are, however, some who go and "enjoy" these turns, fully cognisant of the cruelty involved in the capture, transport, training and lifelong imprisonment of these unfortunate animals. Such people do undoubtedly lay themselves open to be considered, as Jack London said, not normal.

The chief reasons which led the National Association of Head Teachers to deprecate the attendance of children at these shows were because they tend to destroy sympathetic imagination, lead them to believe that animals learn and perform these tricks naturally and without compulsion, and tempt children to try to make their own animals do similar tricks.

With regard to the interest Mr. Birrell evinces in lepidoptera, it may ease his mind to know that they have not so far crept, jumped or otherwise entered into our propaganda nor, I may add, elsewhere, since the days of dug-outs and billets. The question of the seaside moke, however, is no laughing matter. He is often overloaded with some thoughtless adult, and his gratitude for a bucket of water is well worth the effort involved.

EDMUND T. MACMICHAEL,
Hon. Secretary,
Performing and Captive Animals' Defence League.

17, Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C.2.

Mr. Francis Birrell writes: As Mr. MacMichael and I are in agreement about tiger turns, there is no need to discuss the subject further. I am grateful for more information about the spikes. Still, I should have thought that even so, they were pretty risky—more so for the keeper than the tiger. I am sorry Mr. MacMichael does not follow my argument about the states of mind of the onlooker and the performer. If he thinks a bit longer, he will see that it is sound."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I do not think Mr. Birrell has quite appreciated the difficulties of the humanitarian position. The dilemma is that if he proposes to persecute sportsmen for their evil states of mind, he is accepting a principle which would equally allow a sporting dictator or a majority of sportsmen to persecute humanitarians as "loathsome cranks." If, on the other hand, he holds that animals have a right to be protected against cruelty, he must surely hold that they have a right to be protected against murder and against the slavery of domestication. And since his only means of knowing that animals wish to avoid pain is by observing their behaviour, and since similar behaviour can be observed in plants, it is hard to see how he can avoid the Erewhonian *reductio ad absurdum* of living on rotten cabbages and fruit of which he has planted the seeds. Any argument that justifies meat eating by the pleasure (or other good) of the eater justifies fox-hunting or bullfighting by the pleasure of the spectators.

These considerations seem to show that the whole position of the persecuting humanitarian is as impossible as that of persecuting absolute moralists.

JULIAN BELL.

Charleston, Firle, Lewes.

THE DOUGLAS SCHEME

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Hobson does not answer my question, but I take it from his letter that, while not denying the truth of the statement "Where any payments in money appear twice or more in series production, then the ultimate price of the product is increased by that amount multiplied by the number of times of its appearance, without any equivalent increase of purchasing power," he does not admit its importance. I feel sure that he does not do himself justice in suggesting that he does not understand it.

Mr. Hobson will, I know, acquit me of any desire, at this juncture and in this connection, to score a debating point. I am anxious to convince him that the process of reinvesting money in the industrial system, which he himself quite correctly regards as being one of the roots of the present difficulties, is not solely a voluntary process confined to the investor, but is, to a much greater extent in the modern world, an involuntary process which takes place every time an article is purchased. This must be so where the money cycle is shorter than the production cycle, since the passage of a given sum of money more than once through the cost accounts of industry simply means that all past purchases financed by that cycle of money reappear as cumulative cost in a later product, while only the same sum of money appears as purchasing power. Apart from theory, this is quite obvious from a consideration of the objective facts.

If we were to add together the cost price of all the extant machinery, buildings, roads, railways, fences, motor-cars, ships, and so forth, in this country, it is obvious that we should arrive at a figure which would be colossally in excess of (let us say, ten times) the deposits in the banks, although those deposits themselves mainly consist of loans which have to be repaid to the banks. In consequence of this we get a constant writing-down from cost price of the value of the real capital assets of the country, in many cases bearing no relation either to their cost price or to their real value. And yet by orthodox methods of accounting it is quite impossible to charge collectively in the cost of the products to which they contribute such sums as will redistribute purchasing power to the private investors who finance their creation while yet keeping selling prices at a figure which will insure distribution of the product.

There are several statements in Mr. Hobson's letter on which I should feel inclined to comment in a general discussion, but they are only indirectly relevant to the question at issue.

8 Fig Tree Court, Temple, E.C.4. C. H. DOUGLAS.

LYTTON STRACHEY AND GORDON

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your issue of January 30th, Mr. Leonard Woolf's admirable account of Lytton Strachey concludes with a personal attack upon myself for a signed review which I wrote for the *Observer* upon Mr. Bernard Allen's *Gordon and the Soudan*. That review was written on November 23rd, long before I heard through the papers that Lytton Strachey was seriously ill. Mr. Woolf says it would have amused him, and I can only hope it would have given him as much amusement as some of his books gave me.

My point was to maintain that an author who had never known the heat and thirst of the tropics had no right to charge Gordon with the drunken habit of continually tippling brandy-and-soda; especially as Lytton Strachey appears to have relied upon the sole authority of Colonel Chaillé-Long, an inaccurate and prejudiced writer, as Mr. Bernard Allen has proved. Kitchener's statement that "the whole thing is a *damned lie*" is sufficient evidence for me; but plenty of similar evidence, including that of Slatin Pasha, has come in lately, and I am content to leave it at that.

But Mr. Woolf further charges me with being blind to Lytton Strachey's intellectual integrity. Yet only fourteen lines earlier he tells us that "he would display, on occasions, an almost contemptuous, if not unscrupulous, disregard of accuracy in detail." It seems to myself a pity that one of these occasions appears to have been the depreciation of Gordon's character. But since Mr. Woolf can see no more in Gordon than "a distinguished soldier who read the Bible," the gulf between him and me is evidently so wide and deep that further discussion would be useless.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

COVENT GARDEN OPERA

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Turner's fears of there being no international grand season this year at Covent Garden, to thousands of real lovers of opera (such as those who have to pay dearly for the limited accommodation in the far back loft) this will not be such a terrible calamity as apparently it would be to Mr. Turner.

For close on a century thousands of pounds have been lavished on foreign artists at Covent Garden. Admitted they were, and their successors are, mostly pre-eminent; but if Lady Snowden, as Mr. Turner infers, thinks it is time a real helping hand were given to a British Company, and considers that their performances are meritorious enough to please and satisfy thousands of grand opera lovers, she is quite right and it is most earnestly to be hoped that her praiseworthy patriotic ambition may be realised and permanently stabilised.

The yearly repetition of the international grand season is not necessary, as Mr. Turner thinks, to educate the public into liking grand opera. The appreciation is already there. It is now, as it has always been in London and the provinces, a question of prices. For generations the grand season has been a great Society function and the rich patrons have subscribed lavishly to perpetuate the world-famous opera festival. But times are changing. To meet the needs of to-day Covent Garden Opera House requires modernising, reseating and repricing on the lines of an up-to-date cinema.

The Old Vic and Sadler's Wells prove conclusively that, if given seats at prices the great mass of middle classes can pay, popular grand opera either in London or the provinces will fill a theatre all the year round. As to the connoisseurs and grand season patrons of international opera who would not patronise the British Company's performances, their superior tastes will no doubt be amply provided for by Sir Thomas Beecham elsewhere. POPULAR OPERA.

GOOD TASTE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As your "critic" is such an authority on "good taste," might he not have paused before making, a few paragraphs previously, an ungenerous attack on the memory of a recently dead man, whose tragic fate is still a matter of infinite sorrow to all who were privileged to know him well, and who, whatever else may be said of him, never changed his political coat?

News Chronicle, 19-22 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. STUART HODGSON.

JOHN CHAPMAN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—For the purpose of the publication of a book I am seeking for any information about Dr. John Chapman (1822–1894), the owner and editor of the *Westminster Review*, the organ of the Philosophical Radicals. Mrs. Chapman continued the publication thereof, first from Paris, and afterwards in London and it ceased publication in 1907. At that time a younger lady, whose Christian name was "Nellie," and whose surname I have forgotten, was living with her. I shall be glad of any information regarding Dr. and Mrs. Chapman. May I say that the period I particularly wish to deal with is 1852–54, when "George Eliot" was editing the *Review*, and William Hale White was assisting in the bookselling department. HUBERT B. MATTHEWS.

14 St. Michael's Road, Bedford.

BOOKS ABOUT DISARMAMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Under this title in your inspiring Disarmament Supplement of January 30, it is stated that during the Disarmament Conference a *Journal* and a *Verbatim Record* will be published daily by the Union of Democratic Control. In point of fact, these two publications are being issued by the League of Nations Secretariat in Geneva, and are therefore obtainable from us as the sole agents in this country.

With regard to the *Daily Journal* of the Conference, we think it would interest your readers to know that this not only

contains programmes and agendas but a full summary of the discussions. May we also point out that a special edition of the *Armaments Year-Book* has just been published by the League for 1932 (paper 7s. 6d., cloth 10s.), while the *Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference* are now available in ten volumes (£3 15s. 6d. the set)?

PETER SAVARY.
Manager.

George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.,
40 Museum Street, London, W.C.1.

Miscellany

THE REV. WILLIAM COLE: A REVIEW

WE now have four parson diarists who give us, each in his own particular way, intimate pictures of village life at the end of the eighteenth century, and whose diaries have been published within the last few years. They are each of them punctual, practically daily recorders of events, and none of them refer, except in a very perfunctory way, to any of the great occurrences which were commanding public attention outside the boundaries of their parishes. William Jones, of Broxbourne, loved and strongly recommended diary writing. He was an eccentric, humorous and lovable man who, unlike the others, was occasionally addicted to morbid introspection. We can never forgive him for having destroyed the companion volume to his journal, namely, his *Book of Domestic Lamentations*. John Skinner, of Camerton, was a very different type. Sincere, high-minded, and well-meaning, he entirely failed, as one can see even from his bald entries, to live in peace either with his parishioners or even with his family. His eventual suicide gives his diary a very poignant interest. James Woodforde's record of his life at Weston, which is the longest and most practical of them all, illustrates by his method that a much more accurate and real picture of a man can be drawn from a full objective diary than from the elaborate attempts at self-analysis in which some diarists revel. Now we have William Cole, of Bletchley, in an admirably edited volume in which no liberties in the way of omissions or corrections have been taken with the original manuscript. Cole was an antiquary like Skinner. But, like other diarists, he seldom writes much about his work. His method very much resembles that of Woodforde, although he avoids daily repetitions and does not describe *every* meal he eats. Weather, health and servants so distract most diarists that they very properly cannot avoid referring to matters which thus affect their daily mood. Cole is no exception, but he makes no "domestic lamentations," as his family hardly figure at all in his diary. Unlike the others, he had a link with the great world outside. Horace Walpole enjoyed his friendship and probably found him useful in collecting and research work. But except for a reference to some china and some incense for burning "immediately after dinner is removed . . ." "a Peice of Luxury I learned with him at Paris," he merely mentions the receipt of letters from him. Walpole had a high opinion of him. In one letter he writes: "You are always abundantly kind to me and pass my power of thanking you. You do nothing but give yourself trouble and me presents." Even in the bald and sometimes puzzlingly involved passages of his diary Cole, without knowing it and certainly without intending it, shows us his good nature and generosity. He seems constantly to be lending people money and, when things go wrong—and that is where a man's character is revealed—he is all for making it up, for conciliation, for peace; "it was very unpleasant to me to have Squabbles with anyone." Day after day, in noting the incidents of village life, he mentions a large number of people, but seldom describes them or makes any illuminating comments about them. But on the rare occasions on which he allows himself a word of criticism, it is very much to the point. With Stevens, "the Hog," he has incessant disputes because of cattle and horses breaking through fences. He describes how at first he took to Stevens, "I rather liked his clownish Roughness and thought it an Indication of an honest Ignorance and Goodness of heart." But eventually he is obliged to say: "I own the Man's Brutality quite frightens me and I would not be concerned with such a fellow on any terms." Mr. Pitts he describes on one occasion as "horribly black, envious and out of Humour." When Mrs. Willis is mistakenly addressed as "the honourable Lady Willis," he adds, "this will make her sleep better." Dr. Pettingal, who seems to have been an atrocious pedant, "stunned" him "with his scraps of Plato," and Cole remarks that "it is more than probable from his scraps introduced by Piecemeal . . . that he has only a superficial knowledge of what he pretends to be at the Depth of." There is a note of philosophic resignation in his reference to an old friend, Richard Stonehewer, who, since he had become private secretary to the Duke of Grafton, never came near Cole, although he often passed through the parish. "So soon do People suffer themselves to forget their old Friends when they are surrounded by the Great and are got above the World!" William Cole, we may be sure, would never have behaved like this. He clings to his old friends, and cannot even part with his servants in spite of their misbehaviour. Matters ecclesiastical are referred to from time to time, and he shows strong animosity against Dissenters who surely "are more dangerous to our Constitution and Christianity in General than the Papists." Without a syllable of complaint Cole resigns his living at Bletchley in favour of a young and undesirable member of the patron's family, and migrates with his belongings to a damp, uncomfortable house at Waterbeach, where he undertakes the duty at the ridiculous stipend of twenty pounds a year. The Editor, we are glad to note, promises us another volume.

PONSONBY.

* *Cole's Blecheley Diary* (1765-67). Constable, 16s. net. Edited by Francis Griffin Stokes.

A LETTER

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

In my opinion you are keeping something back. Last year when you went to Paris and did not see Madame du Deffand but measured the exact length of every nose on every tombstone—I can assure you they have grown no longer or shorter since—I was annoyed, I admit. But I had the sense to see that, after all, you were alive, and a clergyman, and from Bletchley—in fact, you were as much out of place in Paris as a cowslip impaled upon the diamond horns of a duchess's tiara. Put him back in Bletchley, I said, plant him in his own soil, let him burble on in his own fashion, and the miracle will happen. The cows will low; the church bells will ring; all Bletchley will come alive; and, reading over William's shoulder, we shall see deep, deep into the hearts of Mrs. Willis and Mr. Robinson.

I regret to tell you that I was wrong. You are not a cowslip. You do not bloom. The hearts of Mrs. Willis and Mr. Robinson remain sealed books to us. You write Jan. 16th, 1766, and it is precisely as if I had written Jan. 16th, 1932. In other words, you have rubbed all the bloom off two hundred years and that is so rare a feat—it implies something so queer in the writer—that I am intrigued and puzzled and cannot help asking you to enlighten me. Are you simply a bore, William? No, that is out of the question. In the first place, Horace Walpole did not tolerate bores, or write to them, or go for country jaunts with them; in the second, Miss Waddell loves you. You

shed all round you, in the eyes of Miss Waddell, that mysterious charm which those we love impart to their meanest belongings. She loves your parrot; she commiserates your cat. Every room in your house is familiar to her. She knows about your Gothic chamber and your neat arched bed; she knows how many steps led up to the pantry and down to the summer house; she knows, she approves, how you spent every hour of your day. She sees the neighbours through the light of your eyes. She laughs at some; she likes others; she knows who was fat and who was thin, and who told lies, who had a bad leg, and who was no better than she should have been. Mr. and Mrs. Barton, Thomas Tansley, Mr. and Mrs. Lord of Mursley, the Diceys, and Dr. Pettingal, are all real and alive to her; so are your roses, your horses, your nectarines and your knats.

Would that I could see through her eyes! Alas, wherever I look I see blight and mildew. The moss never grows upon your walls. Your nectarines never ripen. The blackbird sings, but out of tune. The knats—and you say "I hardly know a place so pestered with that vermin as Bletcheley"—bite, just like our gnats. As for the human beings they pass through the same disenchantment. Not that I have any fault to find with your friends or with Bletchley either. Nobody is very good, but then nobody is very bad. Tom sometimes hits a hare, oftener he misses, the fish sometimes bite, but not always; if it freezes it also thaws, and though the harvest was not bad it might have been better. But now, William, confess. We know in our hearts, you and I, that England in the eighteenth century was not like this. We know from Woodforde, from Walpole, from Thomas Turner, from Skinner, from Gray, from Fielding, from Jane Austen, from scores of memoirs and letters, from a thousand forgotten stone masons, bricklayers and cabinet makers, from a myriad sources, that I have not learning to name or space to quote, that England was a substantial, beautiful country in the eighteenth century; aristocratic and common; hand-made and horse-ploughed; an eating, drinking, bastard-begetting, laughing, cursing, humorous, eccentric, lovable land. If with your pen in your hand and the dates facing you, Jan. 16th, 1766, you see none of all this, then the fault is yours. Some spite has drawn a veil across your eyes. Indeed, there are pouches under them I could swear. You slouch as you walk. You switch at thistles half-heartedly with your stick. You do not much enjoy your food. Gossip has no relish for you. You mention the "scandalous story of Mr. Felton Hervey, his two daughters and a favourite footman" and add, "I hope it is not true." So do I, but I cannot put much life into my hoping when you withhold the facts. You stop Pettingal in the middle of his boasting—you cut him short with a sarcasm—just as he was proving that the Greeks liked toasted cheese and was deriving the word Bergamy from the Arabic. As for Madame Geoffrin, you never lose a chance of saying something disobliging about that lady; a coffee-pot has only to be reputed French for you to defame it. Then look how touchy you are—you grumble, the servants are late with the papers, you complain, Mr. Pitt never thanked you for the pigeons (yet Horace Walpole thought you a philosopher); then how you suspect people's motives; how you bid fathers thresh their little boys; how you are sure the servant steals the onions. All these are marks of a thin-blooded poverty-stricken disposition. And yet—you are a good man; you visit the poor; you bury the infected; you have been educated at Cambridge; you venerate antiquity. The truth is that you are concealing something, even from Miss Waddell.

Why, I ask, did you write this diary and lock it in a chest with iron hoops and insist that no one was to read it or publish it for twenty years after your death unless it were that you had something on your mind, something that you wished to confess and get rid of? You are not one of those people who love life so well that they cherish even the memory of roast mutton, like Woodforde; you did not hate life so much that you must shriek out your curse on it, like poor Skinner. You write and write, ramblingly, listlessly, like a person who is trying to bring himself to say the thing that will explain to himself what is wrong with himself. And you find it very hard. You would rather mention anything but that—Miss Chester, I mean, and the boat on the Avon. You cannot force yourself to admit that you have kept that lock of hair in your drawer these thirty years. When Mrs. Robinson, her daughter, asked you for it (March 19th, 1766) you said you could not find it. But you were not easy under that concealment. You did at length go to your private drawer (Nov. 26th, 1766) and there it was, as you well knew. But even so, with the lock of hair in your hand, you still seek to put us off the scent. You ramble on about giving Mrs. Robinson a barrel of oysters; about potted rabbits; about the weather, until suddenly out it comes, "Gave Mrs. Robinson a braided Lock of Lady Robinson's Mother's hair (and Sister to Mrs. Robinson of Cransley), which I cut off in a Boat on the River Avon at Bath about 30 years ago when my Sister Jane and myself were much acquainted with her, then Miss Chester." There we have it. The poisoned tooth is out. You were once young and ardent and very much in love. Passion overcame you. You were alone. The wind blew a lock of Miss Chester's hair from beneath her hat. You reached forward. You cut it. And then? Nothing. That is your tragedy—you yourself failed yourself. You think of that scene twenty times a day, I believe, as you saunter, rather heavily, along the damp paths at Bletchley. That is the dreary little tune that you hum as you stoop over your parments measuring noses, deciphering dates—"I failed, failed, failed on the boat on the Avon." That is why your nectarines are blighted; and the parrot dies; and the parlour cat is scalded; and you love nobody except, perhaps, your little dun-coloured horse. That is why you "always had a mind to live retired in Glamorganshire." That is why Mr. Pitt never thanked you for the pigeons. That is why Mr. Stonehewer became His Majesty's Historiographer, while you visited paupers in Fenny Stratford. That is why he never came to see you, and why you observed so bitterly, that "people suffer themselves to forget their old friends when they are surrounded by the great and are got above the world." You see, William, if you hoard a failure, if you come to grudge even the sun for shining—and that, I think, is what you did—fruit does not ripen; a blight falls upon parrots and cats; people would actually rather that you did not give them pigeons.

But enough. I may be wrong. Miss Chester's hair may have nothing to do with it. And Miss Waddell may be right—every good quality of heart and head may be yours. I am sure I hope so. But I beg, William, now that you are about to begin a fresh volume, at Cambridge too, with men of character and learning, that you will pull yourself together. Speak out. Justify the faith that Miss Waddell has in you. For you are keeping one of the finest scholars of her time shut up in the British Museum among mummies and policemen and wet umbrellas. There must be a trifle of ninety-five volumes more of you in those iron-bound chests. Lighten her task; relieve our anxiety, and so add to the gratitude of your obliged obedient servant,

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

HELEN!

HELEN! First and foremost it is a most glorious spectacle. I have never seen one so lavish, various, dazzling, rich, or, at moments, so imposing. There is so much to look at that a certain misgiving mixes with one's amazed delight. (I speak for myself.) There was more fascinating detail, more graceful and rapid movement, than the eye could take in, or follow. I felt again as I had felt when as a child I was taken to a three-ringed circus. No, not all

the time—there were two superb scenes in which a sense of pleasure was undisturbed by a sense of regret that one had not six pairs of eyes; the scene of the Judgment of Paris, a huge Le Brun fresco, exquisite and bold in colour, cool and gorgeous, and then—Helen's Bedroom. I gazed in ecstasy through the whiteness of that room! How many shades there can be in that negative colour! What impressed me most in Mr. Oliver Messel's scenes was his use of white. He made it thrill more than the trumpet-colours, more than scarlet and gold. His white temples stood out in glittering peace against blue skies; his white draperies were symphonies in white. In the first scene of the last act, again a bedroom scene, this time the room of Helen and Paris in Troy, white shaded into blue like snow and ice in a glacier crevass. And between these scenes was a revel of coloured variety. The Feast of the Kings was a rollicking, glittering riot. One moment stands out in this ballet. All the revellers gather round Paris, standing on a table, and reach out their cups to him, making a great golden sun-flower in the centre of the stage; then the romping, swooping music seizes them again, and Paris slips off unseen to Helen to wake her from one love dream into another.

Helen is not only a spectacle. It is an *opéra bouffe* with a most amusing lively libretto. *La Belle Hélène*, on which it was based (Mr. A. P. Herbert has added a new and admirable last act), was a blend of the spirit of the Second Empire and classic traditions so familiar to Frenchmen on their own classic stage. There was to them a delicious mischievous irreverence in making fun of Greek heroes. For us this source of amusement has dried up, and the adapter and the producers and designers have had to blend the sentiment of Second Empire frivolity (historic now to us) with the kind of fun which such old-fashioned plays as *Pygmalion and Galatea* provided for our fathers. To do more than suggest by notes in costume the spirit of the Second Empire would have been to produce a more coherent performance, no doubt, but a frankly historical revival, and one only delightful to connoisseurs. The wit, I understand, of the original librettists, was largely topical. *Helen* is streaked with bluffness; and good-humoured, easy-going, British foolery has been substituted (principally in the person of Mr. George Robey, Menelaus) for the original Gallic sharpness and wit. I delighted myself in the subtlety of the crude humour of Menelaus, and in the perfect timing of Mr. Robey's acting. It was a bold piece of casting, because whenever that much put-upon, universally ignored man is on the scene, it is impossible to notice anything else—Mr. Messel's designs, the loveliness of Helen, or the facile gaiety of the music. This is the danger of such too-generous mixtures. We are not likely to see assembled again the work of so many talents as Mr. Cochran has bought together, or to sit down again to such a prodigious feast; but it is certainly what Dr. Johnson once called "rich confused feeding." You must be a *gourmand* to enjoy it; the *gourmet* is inclined to think from time to time how much more he would relish the separate ingredients, if one or the other predominated; if Mr. Herbert, Mr. Robey and Mr. Berry could have had their way with him, or he could have yielded himself to the light, sensuous, easy melodies of Offenbach, or to the pleasures of the eye, the art of Mr. Max Reinhardt and Mr. Messel—entirely. I am not "musical," but it struck me that possibly Mr. Korngold was taking Offenbach's music too seriously—not quite light-heartedly enough. Miss Evelyn Laye looked and moved exquisitely; her voice is a small, but a very pretty one. Sometimes I thought she sang (not in the love scene that must be unique) as though she had forgotten this was *opéra bouffe*, not opera. Often we missed the words, and not only in her case. This is a loss. But after the strain of the early performances is past, that over-seriousness will diminish, and the beauty, the fun in this splendid entertainment, will tend to harmonise more completely.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

THREE POEMS

BAPTISM

DEEP in a forest pool
By night, unseen,
I bared my body to the sleepless cool
And made it clean.

The stream encompassed me,
Even my soul;
Heart's blood of Earth flowed round me—I was free
And I was whole.

TIME

THE years as they are done
Within the past lie sealed,
Nor stands, ere 'tis begun,
One hour revealed.

Here through the fragile room
Of one slight second sped,
Life is: and into gloom
As swift has fled.

THE LIVING DEAD

COURAGE falters, tears are dry,
Heart and soul are like to die;
Listless down the lanes of time
Lags this being that is I.

Hang these limbs about my spine
Limp as linen on the line,
Nor for me the blood still flows
Round this body that is mine.

MILES TOMALIN.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

A Play of Passion.

PLAYGOERS may be grateful to the London Theatre Company and Miss Van Volkenburgh for the solid meat of drama at the Fortune Theatre. *The Dark Saint* is an adaptation, by Miss Barbara Ling, of the *L'envers d'un Sainte*, by François de Curel, produced by Antoine in the nineties. It is a sombre work, the story of a nun's return, after seventeen years, to her home in a small French provincial town. In her convent she had trained young girls and tried to give herself to God in atonement for an apparent accident which was really her unsuccessful effort to kill her faithless lover's young wife and unborn child. Julie Renaudin's life in her convent has been no vocation, she has become set in a mould of brooding regret for lost love and of hatred of her gentle supplanter, Jeanne, sincerely and beautifully acted by Miss Catherine Lacy. Julie returns and gains a complete domination over the mind and affection of Christine, the sixteen-year-old daughter of her former lover. (Miss Dorothy Gibson's portrait of a very young girl was both touching and convincing.) Julie persuades Christine to break her engagement, and enter a convent, because her fiancé has had a previous affair with a farmer's daughter. Driven to the fierce desperation of the gentle by her fear for her daughter's happiness, Jeanne attacks Julie and makes her realise that her motive is not love of Christine's soul but of her body, not love of God but desire for domination and revenge. Julie is utterly broken, releases Christine and goes back to the guest house of her convent.

There are only six characters, all women, all admirably acted. It is a man's picture of a woman's world, with its constant preoccupation with love or small practical matters, but it is a picture that is often true. It is an Ibsen theme, treated in the Ibsen manner, past events appearing naturally in conversation—but how much richer a picture it would have been in Ibsen's hands! Provincial life seems a good soil for the dramatist. Its humours in *The Dark Saint* are shown only in the old servant, Barbe, and in Madame Renaudin (exquisitely acted by Miss May Agate), the bustling head of a French family, vain and sensible, to whom religion is one of the practical and social pleasures of life.

Miss Thorndike has a part peculiarly suited to her powers. Something arid and unattractive in her talent, a metallic and monotonous quality in her voice are not out of place in one who has brooded so long on her wrongs, and we believe in the force of the personality that dominates Christine. She rises easily to her tragic climax and her picture of a soul in utter defeat and dissolution could hardly be bettered. When she asks "whose have I been all these years?" we believe for a moment in the powers of evil.

"See Naples and Die"

In this extravagance at the Embassy Theatre Mr. Elmer Rice endeavours to turn to comedy, and not very successfully. Too often brightness falls in the air from age or feebleness; and very many of the witticisms I should judge from film-going experience to belong to the typical sophomore repertoire. It becomes less and less easy to laugh as a Russian prince is called, successively, Prince Tchehov, Dostoevsky, and Count Karamazov, by a buck American indulging in an interminable Beatrice-and-Benedick duel with his sweetheart; and there are dozens of such pearls in the piece. The plot, involving this young man in an amorous dilemma, and the young woman in a marriage with the Russian for the purpose of obtaining her sister's compromising letters, need not be described. More interesting are two comic character sketches: that of the prince, a melancholy parody very well played by Boris Ranevsky, and an American tourist-lady, stridently superb in the hands of Miss Gwladys Morris. I can think of no better compliment for Mr. Bernard Nedell and Miss Olive Blakeney than to say that they "know their stuff," bestowing, as they do, vitality on the poorest of material.

Verdi's Gaiety

I do not know how long it is since *The Masked Ball* was last performed in London, but I imagine at least fifteen years. The Old Vic production last year of *The Force of Destiny* led directly, I believe, to its performance in the International season at Covent Garden; and I hope their enterprise in producing *The Masked Ball* (now at Sadler's Wells) will be as well supported. *The Masked Ball* was composed by Verdi after *Traviata* and before *The Force of Destiny*. It perhaps falls short of being a masterpiece, because Verdi seems to have met a conventionally "strong" libretto with an almost irrational cheerfulness. What superb music he gives to the cheeky page (prettily played by Miss Nora Sabini), to the two black-cloaked villains in their astonishing laughing song in the second Act, when it is least expected, and in the minuet music at the end, which precedes the murder of the Duke. The minuet, by the way, should not have been hidden at the back of the stage, so that one merely saw the heads bobbing up and down like graceful seals. The production, as a whole, was competent, but the singers were obviously uneasy in unfamiliar parts. Mr. Tudor Davies, as the Duke, and Miss Joan Cross as Amelia, sang and acted excellently.

Julius Cæsar

The Old Vic production of *Julius Cæsar* is a stodgy one—not wholly meritless, but with ineptitudes lacking even the virtue of surprise. One of the inherent defects of this theatre is the encouragement it gives, especially to young raw actors, to attempt to carry conviction by bellowing. The greater effect of contrasting tones is fully exploited only in the quarrel-scene, the opportunities of which are admirably seized by Messrs. Robert Speaight and Ralph Richardson. To my mind, the one outrage of Mr. Harcourt Williams's production is to play the piece in two parts, like a musical comedy. Of all places to break up the action, he chooses the end of the Capitol scene, when the passion of the play is but half mounted. Antony is thus left to confront us in the market-place after our coffee and sandwiches, instead of after the assassination; and Mr. Robert Harris cannot be blamed if the artfully written set-piece loses the significance of its context and becomes no more than a capable recitation. Incidentally, is it necessary for the stage mob in the orchestra-well to punctuate his every breath with its yowling? I was interested too, to find that Mr. Williams has declined to acknowledge the crucial difficulty of the play, which is to convey in the early scenes the obviously necessary impression that Brutus is a giant among pygmies. Mr. Richardson, unaided, cannot "carry the guns," and his Brutus, missing the heroic, becomes a *Gregers Werle de ses jours*, viewed sympathetically instead of satirically. Nevertheless, within its range the performance is intelligent, as is also Mr. Speaight's, nervously alive and sensation-racked.

Simple Fun

Completely unpretentious, *The Last Coupon* at the Garrick Theatre is the sort of play that tempts one to describe it in affectionate diminutives. Its plot and situations are quite remarkably commonplace. Its second act—the dream of a miner's wife who has just heard that her husband has won £20,000 in a football competition—misses some interesting possibilities, and its simple fun holds no surprises. Nevertheless, it is pleasantly written (Mr. Ernest Bryan at moments achieves the authentic W. W. Jacobs tang in his repartees), it has the advantage of breaking fresh ground in its milieu, a Northumbrian mining village, and it is performed by a company which works in admirable harmony, and contains two players of whom I expect to hear a great deal more. Mr. Jack Morrison plays the volatile miner with a vigour and abandon which sweep you along into the very heart of the northern temperament. His surface stolidity is made the setting of two ecstasies, delirious joy, and raging despair (this latter when he finds the winning coupon unposted in his pocket), both of which are supremely comic without forfeiting essential sympathy; and his last act portrayal of a "morning after" is of a poignant greyness. Less spectacular, but quite as finished, is Miss Sal Sturgeon as his patient, cynical-sentimental wife, admiring, deploring, adoring and dreading in the wake of his progress.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Sunday, February 7th—
- Revival of "Warning Shadows" and "Les Nouveaux Messieurs," Academy Cinema.
- Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Albert Hall, 3.

Monday, February 8th—
- Busch Quartet and Serkin, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.
- "Julius Cæsar," His Majesty's Theatre.

Tuesday, February 9th—
- "The Green Pack," by Edgar Wallace, Wyndham's Theatre.
- "The Immortal Hour," Queen's Theatre.
- Kingsley Martin on "The Influence of the Press," B.B.C., 8.30.

Wednesday, February 10th—
- "Romeo and Juliet," Embassy Theatre.
- "The Rose Without a Thorn," Duchess Theatre.
- B.B.C. Russian Concert, Szigeti, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Thursday, February 11th—
- Busch Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.
- "Punchinello," Globe Theatre.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I HAVE never understood why there should be any condemnation for those who praise times past, nor why those who indulge in that sport should ever preface their recreation with an apology. What can one praise, if not the past? No man can praise the future, except he be very expert in the sterilising of natural human apprehension; and to praise the present is an intolerable exercise in self-appreciation which generally relieves a man from the duty of self-criticism and helping in necessary reforms. We cannot reform the past. To spend our time in scolding those things in it of which we disapprove is a useless exhibition; to praise the past is one of the most innocent forms of ancestor-worship, and very often leads to an intelligent criticism of our own times. I have not, of course, the slightest objection to the discovery and the exposure of the oddness, the ridiculousness of the past. Nothing is more certain than the absurdity of our ancestors and their customs except the absurdity of ourselves and ours: some critic from another star would alone be capable of judging between us. The problem is as impossible of solution as that other, whether the old or the young are the more lacking in wisdom. To find a cause for ridicule, however, in life does not prevent one from finding praiseworthy things: to call our ancestors ridiculous is only to admit that we have not yet traced our family-tree higher than *pithecanthropos erectus*, if that be the name for the gentleman who first swung himself gingerly into his tree-top nest, or staggered, difficultly upright for a moment, to blink at the dawn outside his hardly won cave. It is only human to be a joke, and those alone are condemned who, finding ripe cause for fun in others, see themselves as objects for religious and solemn veneration.

* * *

Two books this week have set me wondering whether our recent ancestors were really as comic as some of us think. I have been reading Mrs. Peel's *The Stream of Time* (Lane, 18s.) and Heinrich Schwarz' *David Octavius Hill* (Harrap, 21s.). Mrs. Peel's book, in spite of its fascination, is an annoying example of an annoying type—it is a mixture of history and fancy. Instead of a straightforward record of her period, such as Walter Besant made in his *Fifty Years Ago*, she has invented a most unnecessary family of Landons, who intermingle with the historical personages of her story, which treats of England from 1805 to 1861—the year of the Prince Consort's death. Mrs. Peel's machinery is a sad disadvantage because it tempts the writer into a false affectation of simplicity that has all the air of ringleted archness—for her fancied family seems suited to this manner. Also, in her efforts to cover England's social and domestic life in this period, she is apt to leave herself too little space, which she might have gained by excising her inventions.

Mrs. Peel has read widely, and has a gift for arranging her material; but she has no talent for recreating the atmosphere of the past. We go from the great days of Holland House to the early days of Queen Victoria, when she was Melbourne's pupil, to the days of the rise of Peel and the reign of the Prince Consort, and there is never a hint in Mrs. Peel's style that London and England have changed immeasurably in those fifty-seven years. Her work, except that it lacks the stylish grace and gentility of his neat, elegant drawing, is rather in effect like a drawing of Maclise's reproduced in her volume. It is called *Literary Ladies*, and represents Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mary Russell Mitford, Harriet Martineau, Jane Porter, Lady Blessington, Mrs. Norton, Lady Morgan, and L. E. L. They are all very refined, sitting, except for Lady Blessington, at a table: the faces are not smoothed into a completely level inanity, but there is little hint of the excessive differences that really existed in that group.

* * *

That I find Mrs. Peel's book fascinating probably means that I cherish somewhere an unregenerated Victorian strain; perhaps one loves in these days the things which recall a remote past, the England of far more than a hundred years ago, the England that was small, agricultural, and had not been doomed to make the world unsafe through industrialism and capitalism. Of course, there are beastlinesses in plenty in Mrs. Peel's period: it will be a matter of temperament whether you think them better or worse than the beastlinesses of to-day. Kropotkin used to say that there was nothing to choose between a civilised and an uncivilised prison—both were unspeakably horrible, and that seems to me the truth of the matter. I suppose one looks back longingly at this recent past because of our ancestors' fortunate certitude of what freedom was, and how best to attain it: also then machinery and invention were still the toys of their bewitched discoverers, not angry and unsatisfied masters, against which rebellion seems to the larger part of the world something unimaginable. One toy Mrs. Peel does not discuss, though it was one of the most exciting discoveries of her epoch. To-day we are so used to it and its influence that we forget what a miracle photography seemed long after the first decade of its discovery. I have no technical knowledge of photography, though I have watched some of the best photographers of our time at work; but no one who is interested in painting can escape an interest in photography. Had it not been for Daguerre, Talbot and Niepce, we should probably never have had those developments in non-representational art which have shocked, amused or delighted our generation. For it is certain that the painter's movement away from representation springs, consciously or unconsciously, from his conviction that the great photographic artists have carried representation as far as it can be taken. Except, presumably, in those expert circles where the early history of photography has always been well known, it is generally assumed that the best photographic work, especially in portraiture, has been done of recent years, certainly in this century. An exception would be made for Mrs. Cameron, but for no one else. Now comes Heinrich Schwarz' remarkable book on David Octavius Hill, with the astonishing news, fully confirmed by eighty reproductions, that the best work in portrait photography was done just after the art was first invented, by the Scots painter, whose pictures are forgotten, but whose photographs are assured of immortality. Hill was born in 1802; studied the new art of lithography, was secretary in 1830 of the Scottish Academy, and died in 1870. He was seduced into photography in a manner characteristically Scotch, through theology. A leader in the Free Church schism of 1843, he determined to paint a picture of the five hundred signatories to the Act of Separation. He was a landscape painter, and had small skill in the making of portraits, so he called in the camera to redeem his lack. In five years he produced well over a thousand portraits; and, if we may judge from the examples here given, Herr Schwarz is not saying too much when he claims that they still remain the worthiest work photography has given us—at any rate in portraiture. I think Herr Schwarz underestimates, as do most enthusiasts for the camera, the disabling effects of the absence of colour; but I have no doubt he is right that the sitters' wonder added to the artist's success. If only we could have retained a little of that admiration! What could we not have made by now of the cinematograph if every "star" confronted those shooting contrivances under the glaring lights with a perpetual recollectedness that she was assisting at a miracle!

RICHARD SUNNE.

THE PERSONAL EQUATION IN PARTY POLITICS

Elections and Recollections. By SIR ALFRED PEASE. Murray. 12s.

The friends of Sir Alfred Pease, who though now a dwindling crew of laggards loitering by the side of the stream of Time, are still a faithful band, will thank him very cordially for producing another volume of the memories of a once ardent, if always detached, politician and Member of the House of Commons, belonging to what may to-day be called, without any great hyperbole, the "olden time."

Sir Alfred, though born in 1857, was lucky enough, if it is lucky to become a politician early in life, to get into Parliament for the City of York in 1885, and to remain there, with that merry man and best of human companions Frank Lockwood as his yoke-fellow, until 1895, when Mr. Butcher, now Lord Danesford, succeeded in wresting one of the seats, and that one Sir Alfred's, from him, leaving Lockwood in possession of the other one. Two years after this sad disaster, Sir Alfred in 1897 returned to the House, obtaining at a by-election a seat formerly occupied by a cousin (for the Peases are great in cousinships) in the Cleveland division of Yorkshire.

There he remained until 1902, when, owing to a reverse in the family fortunes, he retired, and found strenuous occupation of a kind, perhaps more congenial than Westminster, in the Transvaal; the Boer War with all its horrors and misfortunes being just over and the work of conciliation and administration begun. In 1907, when he returned home, any ideas he might ever have entertained of re-entering the House soon departed, for what he calls the "Neo Liberalism" now in fashion had grown distasteful, and he felt he could no longer worship in Mr. Lloyd George's tabernacle, or help "to make a House, keep a House, and cheer the Minister."

We have called Pease lucky in getting into Parliament at the General Election of 1885, since by doing so he witnessed from the beginning the drama of Home Rule for Ireland as it unfolded itself year out and year in. The stupendous efforts of Mr. Gladstone, that hero in a hurry, the revolt of the Unionists, who included not only Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings, but Lord Hartington and Mr. Spurgeon, the tragedy of Parnell, the melancholy and often shameful history of Coercion, the problems of Ulster and of the House of Lords: these things were not pleasant to live through or now to look back upon. We cannot say of this period of our parliamentary history, as Englishmen in their conceit of themselves are too fond of saying, when in a mood of reminiscence:

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail,
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt—
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair.

Still, to live through that time was a political education, and as we read this book of Sir Alfred Pease's—particularly that part of it that deals with Ireland during Coercion—we can observe how it educated him and made him the Liberal he was.

The first eighty pages or so of the book are mainly devoted to Sir Alfred's pre-parliamentary experiences before he began his diaries, and consequently they can be read with pleasure by young Yorkshiremen and Londoners who usually find the politics of the past both dim and dull. It is amazing how the most frivolous-minded of cockneys will prick up their ears in amazement when you tell them you can remember the days when there was no Cromwell Road! Sir Alfred is also a good hand at a portrait-sketch in words of old-fashioned notabilities, and his account of The O'Gorman Mahon, M.P., and of other out-of-the-way characters is at once graphic and historical.

The Peases, as all the world once knew, were Quakers of the best blood. How many remain Quakers to-day it would be bad taste to inquire. But it is a mistake to suppose that, though a child was born, according to the laws of nature, in a Quaker household, and was never baptised as an infant, or taken to his parish Church, that he was born a Quaker—that came afterwards and sometimes never came at all.

The young Alfred Pease, despite his pedigree, seems to have taken from the first to all sports, pastimes and prejudices of a true-born Englishman. There is nothing strange about this. There were always Red Quakers and Grey Quakers, Wet Quakers and Dry Quakers, Hunting Quakers, and those who never saw the Grand National; of which great steeplechase Sir Alfred (p. 256) movingly writes: "No Englishman's education is complete who has not seen it." As Pease grew up his character developed on familiar lines. His sporting instincts, for he was country-bred, were congenital. He loved animals and studied their habits, both wild animals and domesticated ones, beasts and birds alike. Cruelty he abhorred like all true sportsmen, yet, like most true sportsmen, he was happy in finding it not impossible to reconcile his pastimes with his principles. He was a capital shot both at big game and little.

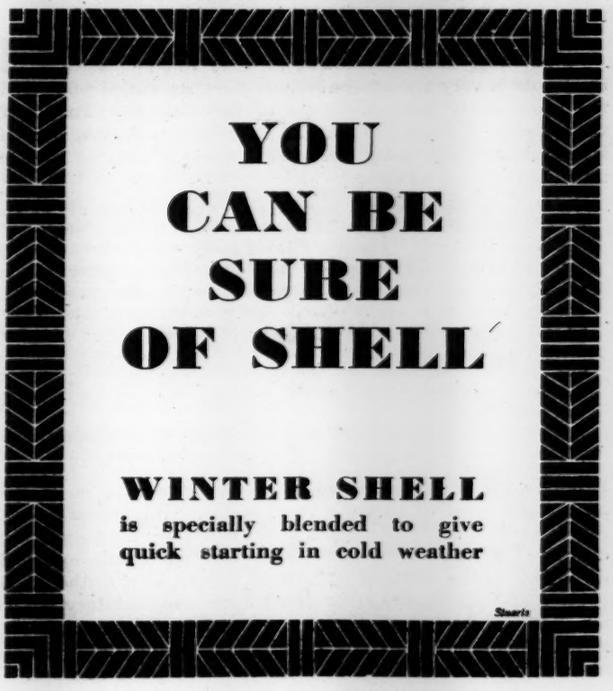
In Parliament Alfred Pease was always a considerable figure, of that excellent variety, the Back-bencher. He was not an unbending Back-bencher, and we doubt not if he had been offered office he would have taken it, but he would sooner have died than asked for it, and never pursued, however innocently, the well-trodden paths of the office-seeker.

His parliamentary diaries make it plain that he was not by nature a hero-worshipper. He never gazed with wide-eyed wonder upon embryo Cabinet Ministers, or even upon the full-fledged articles as they made their way through the lobbies. In fact, he had a dislike perhaps instinctive of the men who get on in politics. Prigs annoyed him; pedants angered him—he suspected the political integrity of lawyers. He never began to understand John Morley; Courtney he respected but disliked—Haldane puzzled him—Bryce repelled him. All this appears too plainly in his diaries.

John Bright, the proud boast of Quakerdom, made no appeal to Pease, who preferred the long-winded, if well-informed oratory of Sexton. Pease seems never to have heard any of Bright's great speeches and if he had done so would probably have thought Lord Rosebery's much better. There was, no doubt, something in John Bright's mental attitude—a touch of arrogance and exaggerated independence that put Pease off. Here was a Quaker who did not even want to be baptised, and into whose mind the thought never so much as entered how very nice it would be to become a Baronet. But this perhaps may be fanciful.

This detachment of mind seems to have occurred to Sir Alfred as one of the reasons why he now remains mentally aloof from the politics of his later days. He says: "This bit of conceit about myself or undue sensitiveness tempts me to allude to the personal equation in politics. The way we are treated as individuals must and does influence us." But he then proceeds to give the worst possible example of this personal equation:

> I call to mind a furious attack of Joseph Cowen, the Radical M.P. for Newcastle, on Dizzy and his Government in a debate on the Bulgarian atrocities. Cowen was a great orator. After his speech, Dizzy met him in the lobby and told him what a splendid speech he had delivered and, though it was an attack upon himself, he wished to congratulate him and to shake hands with him. From that day



Cowen never said an honest word about Disraeli; the attitude of the man and the tone of his great newspaper, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, were entirely changed. I have noticed that in dealing with all sorts and conditions of men the personal touch is of immense value."

Oh! the vanity of the oratorical man! Cowen was the vainest of men, and greedily swallowed the bait Disraeli had prepared for him and went off with the hook in his gills, whilst Dizzy retired to his private room full of contempt for the human race. Pease was not the man to be caught with such coarse flattery. The *personal touch* he missed was of a more reputable nature. Why he did not get it I cannot understand.

As a record of the Irish troubles during Lord Balfour's regime this book is of great value. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

NEW NOVELS

Cressida's First Lover. By JACK LINDSAY. Lane. 7s. 6d.
Marine Parade. By IVOR BROWN. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.
North Wind. By JAMES LANSDALE HODSON. Faber. 7s. 6d.
White Thorn. By CONSTANCE SITWELL. Pharos Editions. 6s.
Shirley Sanz. By V. S. PRITCHETT. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

It has often enough been remarked that anyone can write novels. And it may be added nowadays that almost everyone does. The term is so loose and vague, the "novel" is the resort of so many people who imagine they would like to do a bit of writing but have no intention of submitting to the discipline of a strict form, that one is tempted to wish for powers of excommunication. The day is past, however, when a critic could say with impunity: "This is very pretty, but it is not a novel"—it being now agreed, in the absence of effective protests, that any prose piece of a certain length (fifty thousand to half a million words) which is not too conspicuously an essay, a treatise, a play, a personal reminiscence, a reference book, or a railway guide, shall be deemed to be a novel. So novels they all are. If one is resolved to distinguish between one kind and another, if one cherishes the obstinate conviction that this piece of writing is somehow or other more like a novel than that one is, a definition of the novel is thereby implied and must eventually emerge into statement. I do not propose to attempt a formal definition; but I am aware of implying or suggesting one when I remark that of the five so-called novels on my list only one is a real novel, or, to put it another way, of these five novels only one is the work of a novelist. The distinction is one not of literary merit, but of literary kind. Nor is it (and this point is a little less obvious) a matter of novelist's technique. It is something far more fundamental, and something for which, to be frank, I cannot find a name, though a score might be plausibly suggested. But let us look at our five specimens and see what we find in them.

Mr. Lindsay's first novel is at once irritating and entertaining. At times waggish and facetious, at other times it is witty, and the whole is very readable once you have reconciled yourself to the aggressively post-war idiom of the dialogue. To present the Cressida of legend in terms of the nineteen thirties is not in itself a desperately funny idea, and it would be easy to have too much of this kind of thing:

> "Do you know what Nicander said when he saw me in that blue-fringed affair I brought along to show you the other day——"
>
> Polydora tittered. Cressida's blood boiled.
>
> "I wear my clothes to please myself," she said, "not a crowd of beastly men who couldn't tell Maionian silk from cheap cotton."
>
> "My dear, when you're older," said Coronis, "you'll learn that, even if men aren't critical about dress in the same way as we women are, they sense the difference between a fine dress and a shabby one, or a careful toilet and one that took you only five minutes. They may not know what they feel, but they feel it all right. I hope you can follow me."
>
> "Of course I can," said Cressida, "but it's altogether of no interest to me. I dress solely for my own satisfaction."

However, the pace quickens and the tone improves as we proceed. In the portrayal of Cressida there is abundant malice; she is represented as being the slyest and nastiest piece of goods that ever lived by her wits (and no more decorous description would do justice to the matter). The book is light as a feather, high-spirited and entertaining: it would have made salutary reading for Troilus. It is, moreover, a passable approximation to a novel. Mr. Ivor Brown's is a still closer approximation. Indeed, as novels go, *Marine Parade* is an excellent piece of work. It displays wit, insight, sympathy, and narrative skill. Mr. Brown is master of the telling phrase, except when the telling phrase happens to be master of him; and the snap of his writing carries one delightedly along. Nor is there anything to complain of in the technique. Mr. Brown can write you a novel as neatly as the next man. When he errs, he errs wilfully, not through incompetence; throwing plausibility to the winds and making his characters spout by the page, and crisply, too, in the best journalistic style. His story is of Robert Tarrant, a wealthy young American who comes with his wife to visit the home of his great-grandfather—Cheynton, on the Sussex coast. The characterisation is adequate, the emotions appropriate, the comments witty, and there is plenty of nicely pointed social criticism. The only and the fatal trouble about the book, or so it seems to me, is that there was no imaginative necessity for it. I find it difficult to suppose that it intimately possessed its author; and certainly, though one reads it easily and with pleasure, it does not intimately possess the reader. Mr. Brown is less interested in his Robert Tarrant and his Joan Chilmark than in general topics, and much of the action of the story has the air of having been designed largely as an excuse for discussing these topics. Robert Tarrant and his friend, Shepley, spend a night at The George, at Stoke Cheyning. Tarrant is an architect and Shepley an archæologist. So Mr. Brown is able to treat himself to this:

> There are contractors who will clap a coat of "period" on to a house as easily as humbler men clap on a coat of paint. One day the traveller passes a demure establishment with sober Georgian face; returning a month later he discovers that the beauty specialists have been at work. The face of the house has been lifted, like milady's. But, whereas milady endures surgery to be young, the house must suffer the scalpel to achieve antiquity. A few weeks will enable willing hands to make three gables grow where none was before, while oak sprouts in lavish beams where only brick and stucco were of old. You would not have thought that, in order to emphasise Dickensian visitation, it was necessary to work to the tune of "Good Queen Bess." But the owners of the "George" were not inclined to fail in history for want of going deep enough in. Their idea of a Spanker was a Tudor Spanker and their contractors were empowered to insert the gable and engraft the oak wherever there was room for these necessary signs of reverend seniority. Nobody thought of changing the name to the "Harry" or the "Bess." So Hanover stood in its Tudor jerkin, looking about as happy as an ex-sergeant of the Tank Corps who has been dressed in doublet and hose in order to open motor-cars outside Ye Olde Oake Tea-Shoppe.

This is journalism, both in manner and substance. And journalism is not enough.

Mr. Hodson's *North Wind* is yet another example of a novel that is not a novel. It is vivid, outspoken, sincere, humorous, sentimental; a meandering chronicle of things remembered, with only an admixture of things imagined. But it contains, incidentally, some excellent comic anecdotes; and it will be enjoyed by anyone who does not demand shapeliness and organic unity in a novel. *White Thorn* is a beautifully produced volume, but the story, smoothly written, is thin and sentimental, quite devoid of the "extraordinary spiritual charm" advertised on the dust cover.

And so we come to our one novelist. Mr. V. S. Pritchett's *Shirley Sanz* is a real novel, a piece of authentic fiction. It has colour and movement, poetry and drama. It is the work of a man with a quick eye and a searching mind. As a stylist Mr. Pritchett has matured since the days of *The Spanish Virgin*; his handling of words is as deft as ever, but he is no longer intent on coruscating. His epigrams are the more welcome for their rarity. "The north in him idealised her. One half of his nature was never permitted to know how the other half lived." He is still able to startle us with a remark that achieves poetry not by virtue of its outward show, but by the beautiful precision of its content. "He dared not touch her as she walked down the stairs. He saw her dark head bobbing down and down in front of him as he stepped into the stirred space where her body had been, possessing every Cynthia but the actual one, who moved on the crest of the unattainable before him." But above all he can give his people life, and convince us, ultimately, of his artistic disinterestedness. With all its good qualities, this is not, I think, as good a novel as Mr. Pritchett had it in him to write. Spain is too much with us; the travel diary is too often resorted to; humanity sometimes has to take a back seat. But it is a book that should not be missed.

GERALD BULLETT.

IS CAPITALISM DISSOLVING?

British Trade and Industry, Past and Future. By G. D. H. COLE. Macmillan. 16s.

In 1929, Mr. Cole wrote a striking and necessary book on *The Next Ten Years in British Social and Industrial Policy*. A few months ago, in collaboration with Mr. Ernest Bevin, he delivered a telling blow for the maintenance of sanity by outlining the real as distinct from the superficial factors of last summer's crisis. Now he has returned to the attack with another substantial volume. In essence, his new book is the pamphlet on *The Crisis* writ large and given an adequate historical setting. Its sub-title "Past and Future" is a little misleading. "I have preferred," he writes, "not to assume the prophet's mantle and to write this book on the assumptions which underlie the policy of to-day." His final concern in all these publications, admittedly, is with the sane and progressive remaking of our economic system. In this volume he discusses possible (and impossible) policies. He even expresses a doubt about the capacity of capitalism to achieve its own reconstruction. But he is not concerned in any direct way to lift the curtain on the future. His book is best described, therefore, as a detailed examination of the present economic situation of this country. That examination is made in the light of a considerable historical retrospect, designed to give perspective to the analysis of our present discontents and distresses, to characterise them and trace them to their source, and at the same time to indicate the necessary principles upon which an appropriate policy must be built. The historical section is, in fact, a cardinal part of the book. More than most, perhaps more than any, of those who are attempting to explain our current difficulties, Mr. Cole has pondered over the genesis and development of industrialism. The claim of this book to the most careful attention is precisely that it does try to get things into true perspective. It would be possible to differ from Mr. Cole's historical interpretations at one or two points—for example, he seems to overestimate the expansion of our foreign trade in the post-Napoleonic period, to make too much of the Corn Laws and of their repeal, to minimise the fluctuations of Victorian prosperity. But his outline of British commercial history is substantially true, and the foundations of the detailed description of the conditions and policies of the last ten years are quite firmly laid.

There are some readers whom Mr. Cole's book will merely irritate. The doctrinaire economist who explains everything by reference to monetary phenomena will scarcely survive the admirable chapter on the "great depression" of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The perfervid advocate of *laisser faire* as the only way of economic righteousness will turn first to the chapter on the wages question and will read no more. The tariff-maker will attempt the discussion of tariffs and economic nationalism, but will quite fail to get through it. The Empire Free Trader—but Mr. Cole has nothing save blows for him! Empire Free Trade, he says, is "just bunkum," a "fantastic newspaper fool's cap." If this judgment is somewhat abrupt, in general Mr. Cole argues with restraint. It is a pity that he was not content simply to damn Empire Free Trade with faint praise: there is a deal to be made with the Dominions, even if not a very important one, and there are immense possibilities of development, and not necessarily of baleful development, of naked exploitation, in India and the dependencies. Those who have nothing but a shrug of contempt for Mr. Cole will read neither his book nor this review of it: they are not yet willing to think, though they continue to talk and never fail to vote. The rest of us, whether we share the foreboding of the closing sentences of the book or are hopeful of a voluntary return to easier times, will give Mr. Cole a careful reading. And doing so we shall find food for reflection in every chapter of this closely packed volume. Lest it be thought that Mr. Cole has written only for the reader trained in the intricacies of economic analysis, it should be added that technicalities are completely avoided, the exposition is clear and cogent, rapid summaries of basic points of analysis are frequently introduced, and statistical tables and charts are lavishly scattered through these pages and subjected to illuminating comment. Indeed, the statistical material alone would be sufficient to give it distinction: the only comparison I can make is with volume two of Page's *Commerce and Industry*, and Mr. Cole's tables provide a more useful because a more purposive collection.

Quite early in the book the reader's interest is challenged by Mr. Cole's scepticism regarding the factual reality of the Trade Cycle. He declines to undertake any new theory of it "because 'there ain't no such beast,' as the rustic said when he looked at the rhinoceros." The mournful succession of crises which have punctuated the history of industrialism must be explained in the real terms of their own individual characteristics. Mr. Cole is impatient of the merely monetary explanation of the phenomena either of to-day or of the past. There is no magic incantation which will bring all these complexities within the terms of a single formula. If the greatest single cause of the present world slump is to be found in the economic policy of the United States, the mere reversal of that policy even by such unthinkable means as the destruction of her tariff walls would not bring salvation. But it is impossible to deal with Mr. Cole's merciless despondency by detailing even the outstanding points of his devastating argument. One by one the leading nostrums of the day are examined and dismissed. Finally, he states eight indispensable conditions of successful reconstruction within the capitalist system. Some of them are becoming pretty well common ground to serious thinkers nowadays. Among these are close international collaboration, both among bankers and industrialists and among governments, and the drastic revision of war debts and reparations. There is an increasing body of people, too, who see the urgency of disarmament and the necessity of stimulating home industrial development, not only in the leading countries, as Mr. Cole has it, but in all countries. But there is little sign as yet of the world's willingness to come to terms with Russia, or of a belief in the necessity of a large infusion of State Socialism into the economic system of every important country, or of the complete abandonment of attempts to reduce wages. It is difficult, therefore, to feel that Mr. Cole is unduly pessimistic. Events in any case will review his book. Yet surely the future historian of our troubled age, an age of violence as well as of economic and social disintegration, will be able to discover from Mr. Cole's pages the better tendencies of our contemporary thought. He will discern there the powerful presentation of the case for the planned economy, a case which is stirring many minds in these days. He will note, too, an unusually sharp awareness of the evils which spring from the continued tolerance, under capitalism, of the existence in the world of vast poverty-areas. The outstanding quality of Mr. Cole's work lies not only in its lucid and well-substantiated discussion of facts and policies, but in the sense of values which inspires it, in the independence of his thought, and in his disciplined idealism.

SIR RONALD ROSS

Ronald Ross: Discoverer and Creator. By R. L. MÉGROZ. With a preface by OSBERT SITWELL. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Mégroz is a talented hero-worshipper, and Sir Ronald Ross, whose life he has now written, offers an unusually wide field for this exercise. Not only a scientist but a poet, not only a poet but a novelist, dramatist and mathematician into the bargain—his biographer has no difficulty in making clear the generous breadth of his interests and achievements. It is in that guise he has chosen to portray him—as the man who, against the trend of his whole age, did not allow brilliant success along one line to distract him from half a dozen others, who followed up each of them with energy and was undistinguished in nothing that he did. What is more, lines usually divergent have for him been parallel paths towards the truth. History has provided lamentable instances of scientists who, stepping on to foreign ground, have discarded every "scientific" quality. Literature demands, from such as practise it, a certain spirit of hard-headed self-criticism, of which those who are merely calling upon Apollo feel obliged to divest themselves at the front-door. Sir Ronald's eminence might possibly be defined by saying that, in his treatment of the Muses, he has steered clear of all invidious distinctions, approaching different sisters with the same tact and employing, to subjugate them, the same boldness.

It is true that his estimate of the poet may surprise many of Mr. Mégroz' readers. His claims, they may think, are exaggerated; for, although the quotations which support them are something more than the leisure products of a great scientist, they are also usually lacking in that element without which pure poetry cannot exist. They are poetry, as it were, in the rough; but, while it is an excess of formal skill which makes so much accomplished verse tiresome reading, Sir Ronald's verse includes the stuff of genuine poetry, for some reason chaotic and unco-

ordinated. If it is poetry, then it is the poetry of fragments, the poetry of a single image or a single word. The critic feels he is in contact with a poet, yet realises that, if he were challenged to explain why, he would find it hard to prove a satisfactory case. He recognises the poet in his handiwork, though the work itself often disappoints him. He appreciates—though he can seldom chart its course—the sweeping progress of an uncommon poetic gift.

But the poet has rarely reached such heights, in point of sheer literary achievement, as the scientist, when chronicling his discovery, attained to in the baldest of simple prose :

> The dissection was excellent, and I went carefully through the tissues, now so familiar to me, searching every micron with the same passion and care as one would have in searching some vast ruined palace for a little hidden treasure. Nothing. No ; these new mosquitoes also were going to be a failure : there was something wrong with the theory. But the stomach tissues still remained to be examined—lying there, empty and flaccid, before me on the glass slide, a great white expanse of cells like a large courtyard of flagstones, each of which must be scrutinised—half an hour's labour at least. I was tired, and what was the use ? I must have examined the stomachs of a thousand mosquitoes by this time. But the Angel of Fate fortunately laid his hand upon my head ; and I had scarcely commenced the search again when I saw a clear and perfectly circular outline . . . I looked a little further. Here was another and another exactly similar cell.

This is a passage which prose-anthologists have overlooked, but which has all the vivid directness of great narrative. Has it happened to any scientist in the past to create literature from the record of his own triumphs ?

THE GOLDEN MEAN

Confessions of a Keeper. By D. S. MACCOLL. Maclehose. 12s. 6d.

This selection from Mr. MacColl's writings on art during the last forty years has been long overdue, though with even further delay it would not lose in pertinence and actuality. Some of the controversies in which the author was engaged are now at an end, but momentary issues have never blinded him to permanent values underlying them. Instead of judging questions of the day from the point of view of expediency and fashion, he has seen them in the light of accumulated experience and general principles. Had he cared for little triumphs rather than the art whose cause he has so ably advocated, he might have entitled his book, " I told you so."

For his standard in criticism has been that of the golden mean, which, obscured often enough by contemporary phases of enthusiasm or disfavour, emerges to inevitable victory. It is a doctrine of soundness, a property which in Mr. MacColl's case is not synonymous with dullness. He gives us criticism without tears, and sometimes with laughter, and cheerfully insists that, " Art is itself neither Use nor Beauty, any more than it is Goodness or Truth. It is the ordering of doing and making for use and the ordering of expression for delight," while " The Art of Life is precisely a calculation and ordering of pleasures and avoidance of pains, and the perpetual and silly quarrel in which utilitarianism tries to swallow morality, and morality utilitarianism, is a confusion of the two." Even in purely æsthetic matters one has confidence in a critic who argues from such a background of humanism and sanity.

It is this sense at the same time of balance and enjoyment which gives authority to Mr. MacColl's frequent application of the rein to untempered enthusiasm. He imposes restraint, not out of a spirit of pedantry, but because delight is more lasting when it is firmly based on reason. Thus he points out that with Rembrandt a certain amount comes merely out of the shop, while a perfervid passion for Turner is diverted to a more measured, but also a richer, valuation when he says, " On one wall we see a painter who for years of his life was surely one of the greatest who ever lived ; on the other wall, we see him become, by a series of little changes of interest, an eccentric, in a climax of flimsy form and gaudy extravagant colour. In the work of the surest genius are to be found moments where the flighty or showy or merely dull gets the upper hand." And by regarding the great masters in so steady and unruffled a manner, Mr. MacColl helps the cause of lesser men, when he praises them, whom the vogue has for the time being deserted. The reader takes more note of his estimate of Conder and Monticelli, and ponders, perhaps with a little remorse, this verdict on Sir John Gilbert—" Here is at least a poor relation of Tintoretto."

It is possible that in the future Mr. MacColl's greatest distinction may rest on his having retained a sense of proportion during the first impact of post-impressionism on this country. Then his soundness indeed did him good service, when other critics ran to extremes of panic or of extravagance, and his articles on that occasion have not yet completed their work. *A Year of Post-Impressionism*, *Drawing*, *New and Old*, and *Cézanne as Deity*, are as apposite to-day as when they were written. The period of indigestion in English painting caused by the frantic gulping of Cézanne is almost over, and the time is now ripe for a considered view of his work. Mr. MacColl is ready with it when, after exposing the false claims made for his classicism, plastic painting and geometry, he states, " So rare is his colour sense that Europe has been busy in making a present to him of all the pictorial qualities he did not possess." On Picasso and Matisse, on whom a good deal of flighty adulation is still being lavished, he is equally corrective and fair.

On the basic matters of form and design, as well as on the work of individual artists, he plays the part of genial and lucid arbiter. His experience as keeper gives point to his pronouncements on the organisation of national collections and monuments, and the relations between the artist and the State. Postage stamps are not beneath his notice, and he takes a holiday delight in the analysis of metre as well as skating. The dreamer who wrote the exquisite essay *Venus of the Belvedere* is fully capable too of savouring the remark of the painter's widow—" You see, my husband and I were all in all to one another—more or less." Perhaps he perceived in her another devotee of the golden mean.

T. W. EARP.

A LOST WORLD

Brave New World. By ALDOUS HUXLEY. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

When Peer Gynt went a-prophesying he lost his jewels, much of his personal adornment, and, alas ! his steed. The same sad fate has overtaken Mr. Aldous Huxley ; this squib about the future is a thin little joke, epitomised in the undergraduate jest of a civilisation dated A.F., and a people who refer reverently to " our Ford "—not a bad little joke, and what it lacks in richness Mr. Huxley tries to make up by repetition ; but we want rather more to a prophecy than Mr. Huxley gives us. In this world man has ceased to be viviparous, but retains the power of sexual enjoyment : it is unorthodox to desire or indulge in love, deep emotion, art, religion or what we call natural feelings. Babies are taken, when decanted, into institutions where they are carefully conditioned, mostly by sleep-suggestions. There are five classes in the world, Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon—the last are semi-morons. About the world's occupations Mr. Huxley is a little vague—but everyone is occupied and no one is ever alone, if it can be avoided. A drug, *soma*, checks any tendency to revert to a life of personal desires, brings sleep, dreams, and peace. The only " art " left is the " feelies "—one of the better chapters describes with mordant fury this ingratiating pastime. There are, however, still in the world a few " Reservations " for Savages—where man is still viviparous and uncivilised ; and it is through the visit of two Alphas, on an erotic holiday, to Mexico that Mr. Huxley contrives to introduce some excitement into his fable. Nothing, however, can bring it alive. When Savage returns from Mexico with the two Alphas his " reactions " are watched curiously by the people of the new world. Here Mr. Huxley has not quite thought out his problem —would these conditioned people retain as much of initiative, of memory, of scarcely understood *desiderium* as he gives to some of them ? And if any did would there not long ago have been a successful revolution of men against Man, of force against Frord ? Poor Savage tries, but is alone, and easily conquered. The fact is Mr. Huxley does not really care for the story—the idea alone excites him. There are brilliant, sardonic little splinters of hate aimed at the degradation he has foreseen for our world ; there are passages in which he elaborates conjectures and opinions already familiar to readers of his essays. Most of the wit is of the kind well-known to readers of *Erewhon*—a kind very successful in small doses, but apt to be importunately monotonous—even Butler's ingenuity does not save his satire from its boring moments. Here is a

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ASSETS EXCEED £12,250,000.

pleasant specimen of Mr. Huxley's fun. A high official has been recalling a love-passage of his less discreet youth :

> "Don't imagine," he said, "that I'd had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal."

Brave New World is too much in one key. There are no surprises in it; and if he had no surprises to give us, why should Mr. Huxley have bothered to turn this essay in indignation into a novel? It is a good tract, which might be circulated by the upholders of the "sacred peasant," for Mr. Huxley has perhaps gone farther than he intended. Any life, however dung-scented, fly-blown and fever-ridden, would seem sweet compared with the drugged, unimaginative, mechanical and conditioned boredom of the perfectly happy inheritors of the kingdom of our Ford.

HELLAS TO-DAY

Modern Greece, 1800-1931. By JOHN MAVROGORDATO. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Mavrogordato is Greek by descent, not only in name, but in mind. In easy, well-modulated tones, broken by an occasional burst of fun or thrust at moral hypocrisy, he has embraced the political, economic, and cultural chronicle of modern Greece within the compass of a small book. His instinct for what is important is truer than that of most professional historians. Instead of devoting tedious pages to the guerilla campaigns and Philhellene antics of the War of Independence, he writes a short life of Korais as the founder of Greek nationalism. Instead of censuring Palmerston's bombastic effrontery, he quietly remarks that "Don Pacifico's claim . . . was subsequently reduced by a mixed commission sitting at Lisbon from £26,618 16s. 8d. to £150," and leaves it at that. His epitaph on King Otho is the complete epitaph: "He died four years later in complete obscurity, in so far as complete obscurity could be attained by anyone who insisted on wearing Greek dress in the middle of Bavaria." Yet this lively sense of the absurd is never unreined beyond the limits of a sentence. Facts are the author's chief concern. "The population had increased from 651,233 in 1834 to 2,631,952 in 1907, and as the territory had increased in the same period from 48,976 to 64,292 square kilometres, the average density of population to the square kilometre had increased from 13.2 to 40.9." In other words the population in relation to area had been trebled. This kind of information is the proper commentary on any record of political events.

The perspective of the book is somewhat exaggerated in that more than half of it is devoted to the incidents and consequences of the Great War, ending with a plea for the realisation of M. Venizelos' life-long dream, a Balkan federation. It is thus designed as a handbook to the understanding of Greece as she is rather than as she was. From this circumstance, it might be suspected that Mr. Mavrogordato has some axe to grind, some violent defence or condemnation to undertake, in the controversy that raged and still rages round the events of 1914–1922. Exactly the opposite is the case, and those who have hitherto tried in vain to adjudge between King Constantine and Venizelos, between the hypocritical violence of the Allies and the menace of Baron Schenck, may here find an impartial and wholly fair-minded summary of the case for both sides and of the characters involved. The author makes little or no attempt to assess the morality of the participants. With regard to the Salonica landing, he says: "The King subsequently changed his mind, but the invitation to the French and English troops, if it could be regarded as such, had already been sent." The question is—and Mr. Mavrogordato intends it, for the present, to remain a question—could it be regarded as such? On the other hand he justifies the Asia Minor policy of Venizelos on grounds of great interest, as being the only possible means, since the advent of the young Turks, of saving the Anatolian Greeks from assimilation or extermination. It was not the only means, as the ensuing tragedy proved. But it would have avoided suffering on a scale unknown since the Mongol invasions. The author has little sympathy with the executed ministers. Referring to the offer of Allied mediation in June, 1921, he writes: "Nothing can excuse the madness of the men who rejected this offer." He quotes the *Contemporary Review* to point out that, contrary to general belief, "the Revolutionary Tribunal consisted of nine Royalists and two Venizelists"; and sums up with the words: "Though the indictment had been clumsily drawn, it was made abundantly clear at the trial that these men had been led by party passion to persist in a policy of criminal incompetence, sacrificing the interests of their country to Constantine's tenure of the throne and their own tenure of office." Of this there can be no doubt, and the fact that the unfortunate men were condemned by a majority of their own party cannot be too strongly stressed.

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Poland, 1914—1931

By ROBERT MACHRAY. *Illustrated.* 15s.

"It can be read with ease and profit, and it will long be valuable as a work of reference."—*Sunday Times.*

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The essays in this volume deal with a wide range of subjects and with perennial themes of modern discussion.

SHORTER NOTICES

A Miniature History of Opera. By PERCY A. SCHOLES. Oxford University Press. 1s. 6d.

In sixty pages Mr. Scholes outlines the history of opera. Beginning with Peri's *Daphne* (1597), he notices the important changes in opera made in turn by Gluck, Mozart, Wagner, and Debussy, whose theories are briefly stated. The chapters are divided not by periods but by nationality. Some disproportion arises when five pages are devoted to "Opera in the American Colonies and in the United States," and only two to Russia, but as an elementary guide, critically and readably written, this little book can be recommended. The lists at the end of each chapter of important operas with the dates of first performances will be found useful.

The People's Year Book, 1932. Co-operative Press Agency. 3s. cloth; 2s. paper.

This is the fifteenth year of this admirable annual produced by the English and Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Societies, and there is no falling off in its quality. It is an invaluable book of reference for publicists, lecturers and journalists, and indeed for everyone who is interested in the co-operative movement. Besides the facts and figures of the progress of co-operation in Great Britain, it gives in a summarised form a great deal of information about co-operative developments in many other countries. And in addition it contains a number of articles on more general topics, political, economic and social "questions of the day." It is satisfactory to know that, despite the slump, the co-operators have not lost ground. The statistics for 1930 show a total membership of the retail societies of 6,400,000, which means roughly 5¾ million families, or more than half of all the families in the country. This is an increase of 3.79 per cent. over the previous year. The total sales of the retail societies were £217,300,000, with a net surplus of £27,000,000. The employees numbered 182,000—or, if you take all co-operative employment, wholesale and retail, the production and the distribution sides, over a quarter of a million. Nor are the

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PROFESSOR JULIAN HUXLEY, in *Week-End Review*: "The picture of baboon life is not edifying, but it is illuminating. This may not be a book for all the world and his wife, but it is one which *must be read* by all serious students of behaviour and psychology."

KEGAN PAUL

ENGLAND TO-DAY: A Survey of Her Economic Situation.

BY F. CYRIL JAMES, Ph.D. **6s.**

In simple form this book describes the present economic organization of England. Surveying the situation in regard to finance, industry and trade, it becomes clear that these are closely related to one another and that the individual worker or employer is indirectly affected by economic aims or political policies influencing any one of these fields. An examination of England's position in regard to foreign trade and international finance demonstrates the extent to which her prosperity is dependent upon the economic well-being of other nations.

THE VALUE OF MONEY: A Discussion of Various Monetary Theories, and an Exposition of the Yield Theory of the Value of Money.

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This book gives a classification and discussion of a number of theories dealing with the problem of the value of money. These considerations are followed by the author's attempt at finding a solution which explains the value of money from its interaction with the yield that money is able to produce as an instrument of trade.

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A History of Switzerland

By WILLIAM MARTIN

Translated by Mrs. Charles Booth. With an Introduction by Lord Hewart of Bury, and Maps. 10s. 6d.

Lord Hewart says in the course of his introduction: "Struck by the similarity of the conditions which have produced the League of Nations and of the forces which have, in the course of centuries, moulded the various races of the central mountain mass of Europe into a nation, M. Martin wrote his history—a complete history, as he was anxious to show that, in Switzerland, the logic of events compelled agreement, and that much misery and suffering might have been avoided by an earlier and more complete recognition of the facts. . . . It may be hoped that some knowledge of the history of Switzerland will strengthen the faith of those who believe in the League."

From the *Spectator* review: "The long story from Roman times to the present day is most lucidly and attractively told. What is even more important, M. Martin has written the book to show how Switzerland, divided in race, language, creed and economic interests, has attained political unity in a confederation, and how she thus serves as a working model for the development of the League of Nations into something much fuller and firmer. The Swiss Confederation . . . is a political miracle."

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activities of the movement confined to trade. It does good educational work, especially through the Women's Guild, and this, as well as their social developments and the work of its political party, is touched on in the Year Book.

The Traveller's Companion. Compiled by PAUL and MILLICENT BLOOMFIELD. Decorated by REX WHISTLER. Bell. 7s. 6d.

As a book to dip in *The Traveller's Companion*, prettily decorated and compiled with elegant carelessness, is better than most anthologies of the kind. The pointless triviality of some of the extracts—"I feel quite at home here, much more so than in my own home, so-called. H. Ibsen, *in a letter from Munich*"—even gives the book a freshness which a better collection of prose might lack. A large number of authors have been drawn on for snippets and angles, and they flicker on from one corner of Europe to another at different distances of time like a modern composite travel-film. It is definitely a book for modern taste, light, unsubstantial, witty, modernly irreverent or quaintly in period; a book perhaps that one would borrow rather than buy.

Why the Crisis? By LORD MELCHETT. Gollancz. 3s. 6d.

Lord Melchett was evidently stimulated to write this little book by reaction from the common view that the world's economic difficulties can be overcome by a change in monetary policy. He appeals to his readers to think first of all in terms, not of money, but of real goods and services and of the world's power to produce. In his view, the essential reason why the depression goes on is that there is no adequate prospect of profit for the business man in face of attempts to liquidate stocks of commodities that are above current consumption. These stocks force down prices, the disappearance of profit margins causes a contraction of production, consumption is thereby also contracted, stocks become more redundant than ever, and the whole process is thus self perpetuating. But, he argues, accumulated stocks ought to be not a menace, but an insurance for the world; and they would be if they could be held instead of being persistently liquidated during the slump. He therefore wants a scheme whereby the world's bankers and Governments will combine to finance the holding of stocks and to maintain commodity prices by this means. This is the original part of his book: the remaining sections are commonplace. But Lord Melchett, whether his scheme is workable or not, provides a refreshing change from the professional bankers and economists, in that he does think in terms of real things and real productive forces, and sees that the problem lies in the control of these realities, with monetary control as only a secondary, though important, matter.

Maeterlinck. By AUGUSTE BAILLY. Translated by FRED ROTHWELL. Rider. 5s.

Like much discussion on Maeterlinck this essay is expository rather than critical. It is the work of a disciple whose chief aim is to give a simple account of Maeterlinck's philosophy of life; and it suffers from an excess of simplicity, those guileless question marks taken over from the Master, and words like "justice," "truth," "wisdom," meaningly reiterated. Professor Bailly has probably succeeded in what he set out to do, but it is doubtful whether at this time of day it is worth doing. There are still aspects of Maeterlinck's art which deserve study, in particular his drama and its effects on men as different as Strindberg and Debussy, but Professor Bailly has not touched these. His book "creates within us," as he says of his subject, "a moral atmosphere, a sort of beneficent climate"; but modern readers will probably find it not altogether to their taste.

Lord Cave. By SIR CHARLES MALLET. Murray. 15s.

This book is, in its unassuming way, a tribute to the English character. Sir Charles' portrait of Cave, even in idiosyncrasy thoroughly English, as man of affairs and merited honours is graciously illumined by Lady Cave's introduction to the man in tweeds. She shows Cave improvising humorous verse, amusing children. An anecdote of two Frenchmen discussing him—"He must be French, none but our countryman could have that accent"; "English, look at his clothes"—puts the top-hat on it. It is to such men as Cave that England will ever be indebted, men who, colleagues or opponents, are trusted, and found true servants of the commonweal. We do have our showmen, those, not essential mountebanks, who can "show off" without necessarily giving offence. It says much for our system, however antiquated in various directions, that service is in the long run usually rewarded. Cave was twice Lord Chancellor. It is probable he got more enjoyment, and thought he did better work, in his local government activities; he knew it without any Shavian gratulation. The author does his work well. The style is his man. He has limned for our national portrait gallery and not given us one of those blurred, blotchy, salon sketches so much the vogue, so often apparently dictated by malice aforethought. Cave's gift of judgment, not so much legally or derived from legal experience and erudition, made him a man in, *of* authority. This work is, in the good old fashion, authoritative.

Is it fair to your best friend to make him your Executor? The duties are onerous, and usually thankless; the responsibilities are great and the penalties for neglect are severe. Moreover, he may die, and the expense of appointing his successor is considerable. On the other hand, if you appoint the Westminster Bank instead, the fees (which are paid out of your estate) will probably be only a fraction of the legacy which you would have left to a private trustee

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About Motoring

MORE ABOUT WANTED INVENTIONS

MY recent list of desirable inventions in connection with motoring provoked some lively personal correspondence. The most peevish owners are those who grumble about the atrocious effects of "strangling" a cold engine. They bitterly resent the necessity for choking the air intake, with its consequence of flooding the combustion chamber with unvaporised fuel. This wet spirit washes the oil off the piston and cylinder, and accelerates wear to such a degree that many engines become rattlesome within 10,000 miles. Owners with war experience of aeroplanes and lorries parked out of doors on winter nights in the bleak flats of France and Flanders still remember how they solved their engine-starting problems. The sparking plugs were taken out, heated in an oven or by a blow-lamp, and replaced, after which the engine behaved normally. They resent the modern butcherly method of warming up an engine on wet fuel, and demand electric heating of the induction pipe or carburetter. My reply is that such an accessory is easily designed, and easily fitted; and that any disgruntled owner can instruct his garage to instal such a device on his personal car. But I must really defend the car manufacturer on this indictment. Many of his customers are inconceivably stupid. If he fitted such a heater with an automatic switch which broke the circuit as soon as a certain temperature was attained, he would disfigure his car with a necessarily small and delicate accessory, capable of giving trouble. If he trusted owners to switch the current off as soon as their engines had settled down to their work, a majority of his clients would forget to switch off the heater. The accumulator is already maltreated by 70 per cent. of car owners. They overcharge it in summer till the electrolyte boils away, and they do not replenish the liquid regularly. In winter they overwork and undercharge the cells. Altogether, the average life of a motor-car accumulator is under two years; and now that many cars have coil ignition, accumulator trouble is one of the main causes of irascibility on the part of car buyers. So the designer very pardonably cudgels

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Edited by HAROLD STOREY

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his brain for methods of reducing the load on his accumulators; and nothing will induce him to add to its burdens.

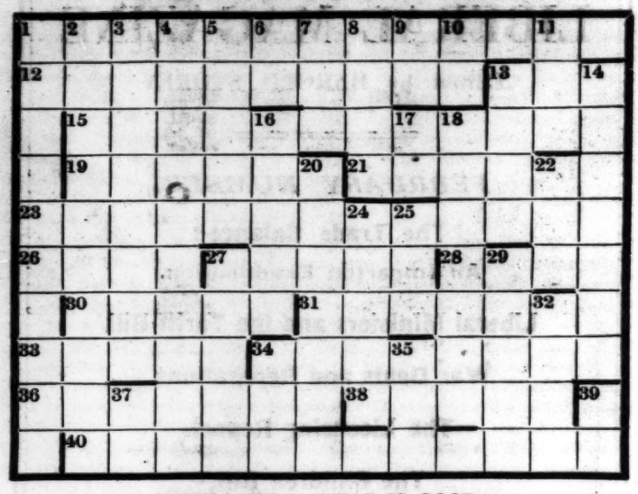
Another batch of critics scream for the elimination of the differential axle. As most people know, this is an ingenious device for permitting the outside wheel on the rear axle to cover a greater distance than the inside wheel when cornering. It accomplishes this function admirably, and it has developed into a most reliable piece of mechanism. It suffers from one serious defect—the drive is always monopolised by the wheel which runs most easily. Consequently if a car is parked on wet turf at a tattoo or other outdoor function, and one wheel cannot get a grip on the damp grass, this free wheel steals all the power and spins idly, whilst the other wheel remains stationary, and the car is thereby bogged. Engineers realise this fault, the importance of which can be exaggerated, for it is only a minority of us who compulsorily put our cars on soft ground. There are two cures for it—the solid, straight-through axle and patent axles, possibly incorporating a device for locking the differential at will. The solid axle is unpleasant. Since the two back wheels must describe arcs of different lengths on every corner, one wheel necessarily skids, and may induce a serious skid by the entire vehicle, whilst the question of tyre wear cannot be ignored. It is less easy to say why the various patent axles are not taken up by car manufacturers. Some of them, such as the De Lavaud, seem to have fulfilled a number of tests with good success. But the factories are not staffed wholly by fools, despite the suspicions of cynical owners; and the research departments of the leading plants probably shroud good reason why these patent lockable axles win so few adherents. It is not merely a question of cost. Rolls, Daimler, and a dozen other concerns hardly think in terms of £ s. d. and are not too hidebound to pay royalties to outside inventors. We may assume that when a perfect rear axle is invented it will be eagerly adopted by many factories.

The interior heating of motor cars has been efficiently solved, and the trade's refusal to standardise such a system is simply due to the absence of any emphatic demand. This demand might exist if the public were aware of the possibilities. At any rate interior heating has already been raised to something of a commercial success by at least one firm. Messrs. John Kay and Graham, of 260, Main Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow, have produced a system which probably defies criticism, and entails no expenditure beyond its first cost. A collector scoop is firmly bolted to the back of the radiator under the bonnet, being mounted at the point where the water is hottest. The pressure of the air supply fed into this scoop naturally varies with the speed of the car. At fifty miles an hour the pressure is high, as may be proved by opening a rear-hinged door, which only a very strong man can pull back to the shut position; at any rate, the tendency is towards an excessive pressure rather than towards any deficiency. No fumes can enter the feed trunk, which admits nothing but pure warmed air. The feed trunk on a private car would normally be led to a couple of grills hidden under the instrument board, and provided with means for diffusing and deflecting the warm air. If the car body is built as two separate compartments, additional trunks would be required for the rear cockpit. The supply is controlled by a valve in the main trunk, operated by a dashboard lever. In conjunction with ventilators in the body, it is a simple matter to change every atom of air in a car or even in a large coach within two minutes, and in such changing no drop of temperature is involved. Such a system is often used on motor ambulances, where a high temperature is essential to minimising shock after accidents. The system can be installed for quite a modest sum in any private car, and represents a great advance on the old method of utilising the foul exhaust gas to heat foot-warmers. In the Monte Carlo Rally trade competitors occasionally apply some method of heat application to the windscreen, in order to minimise misting and condensation, both on the inside and outside of the glass. It is just possible that such a heating installation might meet another problem. Some readers complain of miserable visibility from within a saloon under certain conditions of temperature and atmosphere. A small fan-shaped sector of the front screen is swept clean by a wiper, but the rest of the glazing is misted, and in heavy traffic it is difficult to see all round the car. A double wiper, preferably of the Smith mechanical type, coupled with adequate interior heating of the car, and therefore of the windows, might come near solving this very real difficulty, just as the windows of a well-warmed shop remain transparent under almost any weather conditions.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



INCULCATING WHAT IS GOOD

ACROSS.

1. Beloved of God's smallest creatures.
12. Mine is a double viola.
13. Light blue.
15. Unflurried.
19. A blue riband is implied.
21. My tie is windy.
23. See the title of this puzzle.
26. The same is like a heron.
27. Harmony from an emblem's image.
28. Cicero's I know.
30. Attack after shuffling fivers.
31. A shaved head in disarray!
33. My emblem is parti-coloured.
34. I was a "labour" party in myself.
36. What, the deacon's stole.
38. Hostile forces in retreat.
40. What one looks for in a sorority.

DOWN.

1. In demand at Savoy Hill.
2. The Bishop and Knight are, at the start of the game.
3. I'm leguminous.
4. What Gandhi thinks you and I are.
5. What you might construct with atoms.
6 *rev.* Defeat before 39 *rev.*
7. Half of an old soldier fades away.
8 *rev.* The central idea.
9, 10. I'm muddled (from a blow on the head, perhaps).
11. J.
13. Confusion around Salt Lake City.
14. Made known the Armada's arrival.
16 *rev.* Carries around.
17. Rogue after 6 *rev.*
18. Japanese ornament.
20. There was something of this in Denmark.
22. 1002.
24. My Andrew is just a fool.
25. Consumed.
27. There's worth in episcopal headgear.
29. Philip bickered down my valley.
32. Winchester and Oxford are important.
34. Scene of a Drake episode.
35. Friend of G. Sand's.
37. 9 *rev.*
39. See 6.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS.—1. southerliness. 11. oleaginous. 15. (Water)loo. 16. udometer. 18. so(ie). 19. I.O.M. (Isle of Man). 20. recidivation. 22. Dres(den). 23. ves(i)cle. 24, 29. tur-tle. 25. comedienne *rev.* 31. lactare. 35. Oberon (robe on). 36. ignition. 38. Asia. 39. lean *rev.* (lane). 40. imprisons. 41. Episcopalians.

DOWN.—1. sourdeline. 2. older. 3. tamise. 4. (so)ie *rev.* 5. rnevse (nerves). 6. carol *rev.* 7. (Horat)ius. 8. Eliot. 9. soon. 10. sombreness. 12. eocene. 13. ged. 14. soie. 17. tied. 21. bolt *rev.* 23. viatic. 26. pagan *rev.* 27. monra (Roman). 28. cessi(on). 29. trio. 30. loan. 32. slit *rev.* 33. rim. 34. Poe *rev.* 37. nei(ther). 38. ail.

THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE

A number of solvers have asked for "another football puzzle." Some thought the last "too easy." This is a shade more difficult.

Six teams are entered for the Utopian League championship. Each plays each of the others once. Two points are awarded for a win; one point for a draw. Positions in the championship table are determined by points scored; where points scored are equal, positions depend upon goal average.

The final positions in the championship table are:
1, City. 2, Spurs. 3, Villa. 4, Arsenal. 5, United. 6, Rovers.

Four teams score the same number of points.

Ten goals in all are scored in the competition, three of these by the City. The Rovers, alone among the competitors, do not score a single goal.

The Villa beat the Spurs by 1 goal to 0.
The City beat the Rovers by 3 goals to 0.

Had the scores in this game been reversed, the Rovers would have won the Championship.

What is the score in the game between the Arsenal and the United?

LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

The canoe makes *seven* journeys back and forth, the passengers being as follows:—

(1) Sambo and Tembo. (2) Sambo. (3) Sir George and Sambo. (4) Sir George. (5) Sir George and Jumbo. (6) Sambo. (7) Sambo and Limbo. Or the sequence can, of course, be reversed.

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THE CHURCH ARMY

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR

MR. MCKENNA AND THE GOLD STANDARD—WANTED, A NEW PAPER CURRENCY—JAPANESE AND CHINESE LOANS—NEW SOUTH WALES DEFAULT

MR. McKENNA'S speech to shareholders of the Midland Bank was a remarkable *tour de force*. Waving the banner of a managed paper currency he attacked the gold standard henchmen with great vigour. Then, having silenced all opposition, he hoisted a white flag and advanced to shake hands with the enemy's captain. The first part of this curious escapade seemed to me more convincing. Here are some flashes from Mr. McKenna's sword: "No metallic standard can remain operative if the great creditor nations act in such a way as to create a corner in the metal . . . If the gold standard cannot work without depressing or even ruining trade, the proper course must be to seek another and better one . . . Viewed in this light (of maintaining a stable price level) could any standard have failed more signally than has the gold standard in recent years? . . . I do not know why we should be alarmed by the idea of a managed currency . . . The essential difference between a gold standard and a managed currency is a difference of objective. The instruments are precisely the same—the Bank rate and "open market operations." These instruments have long been employed by the Bank of England whose main objective hitherto, with a gold standard in operation, has necessarily been the maintenance of exchange stability, whereas with a managed standard the objective would be stability of the internal price level . . . Public anxiety about exchange fluctuations is unnecessarily exaggerated."

* * *

Having applauded this thorough-going attack upon the gold-standard system, you will naturally be dumbfounded to hear that Mr. McKenna remarked in the next breath: "I believe we should all welcome a well-managed gold standard if we could get it. . . . Such a standard would be preferable to a pure managed currency unless, as is hardly conceivable to-day, the management were conducted on an international basis." Now there are two accounts of Creation in the Book of Genesis. The true one comes first and the false one later with the statement: "But there went up a mist from the earth." I imagine that Mr. McKenna declared his creation of a managed paper currency in a speech to his colleagues on the board of directors, but that there went up such a mist of ignorance and incredulity that the last part was finished in a complete fog. Mr. McKenna must know that if the gold standard failed because of bad management (according to his argument), a paper currency, which requires as much, if not greater, skill in management, is not likely to be any more successful. He declares, in fact, that the management of a paper currency on an international basis is "hardly conceivable." I submit that Mr. McKenna's arguments lead nowhere. The gold-standard system must be dropped by Great Britain, not because it fails to keep prices stable (obviously it need not fail if properly managed by agreed international action) but because it can no longer be worked by Great Britain. We must be masters of our own destiny. As long as London was the gold centre and Great Britain imposed and worked the "rules of the game," the gold standard and system worked reasonably well. All that is changed. Great Britain should now devise a new currency and exchange system and inform the world that she is prepared to trade on this basis but on no other. The British market is far too important for the rest of the world to ignore.

* * *

Actually there is already a group of countries willing to trade upon a sterling basis. Scandinavia has proposed the formation of a currency alliance among the nations of Northern Europe. Portugal has decided to peg its currency to the £. Here is a wonderful opportunity for the British Government to take the initiative and boldly to declare that it will finance with sterling exchange credits the trade of the British Empire and of all nations willing to join the sterling exchange *bloc*. This policy is strongly advocated by Dr. Eisler in his provocative little book *The Money Maze* (Search Publishing Company, 1s.). Indeed, the idea of the sterling *bloc* has already received powerful support in the City—notably from Mr. A. A. Paton in his speech to shareholders of Martins Bank, and from Sir Basil Blackett, a director of the Bank of England—and would, I believe, command general acceptance among the trading community as soon as its implications were understood. It is opposed only by the fast-disappearing gold-standard diehards and by a few internationalists of the spiritual qualities of Sir Walter Layton. Dr. Eisler goes so far as to declare that the sterling *bloc* is an entirely self-sufficient world. "All the imports of foodstuffs, raw materials and luxuries which England needs can be bought—to the exclusion of France, the U.S.A. and of all countries obstinately maintaining their currency on the deflation level of the dollar and the franc—within the sphere of sterling exchange." In other words, we should not be made to starve for our currency heterodoxy. "If England chooses to convene an Empire Currency Conference," says Dr. Eisler, "open to all countries who want to participate in the discussion of such a programme, the Foreign Office will see how eagerly the nations will respond to such an invitation." Such a conference should have as its terms of reference the formulation of an inconvertible paper currency system, based upon agreed indices of production and prices. Exchange rates under this system would be varied in accordance with the respective purchasing power parties as disclosed by cost of living indices, which would be compiled upon an agreed basis. As long as London maintained an active market in forward exchange, trade between nations of such a currency union would not be handicapped but facilitated. If the choice lies between trying to convert France and the United States to work a new gold standard or inviting the off-gold countries to co-operate with us in working out a new paper currency system, it should not be difficult to incline public opinion to the latter.

* * *

The war in the East has induced selling of Japanese Government bonds, but a more logical reaction would have been a decline in the prices of Chinese Government loans and of the securities of all British companies dependent on or largely interested in the China trade. It is clear that the Japanese will prefer an economic blockade to a costly march into the interior. This implies the stoppage of Chinese trade at the Treaty Ports where the Maritime Customs revenues are collected and where British trading interests are active. The fact that the Chinese Maritime Customs are collected by foreign officials under the control of a British Inspector-General does not help the bondholders if there are diminishing revenues to collect. Japanese Government bonds, on the other hand, are not likely to suffer default, seeing that the League of Nations is loth to call upon its members to declare an economic blockade against a covenant-breaking Power. The cynical investor might therefore be tempted to sell Chinese and buy Japanese Government loans. Here are the prices:—

	Price Jan. 22.	Present Price.	Yield %. Flat.	Yield %. Redn.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Japanese 4% 1910	63	54	7 9 10	7 17 6
Japanese 6% Sterling 1924	91	83	7 5 3	7 10 0
Japanese 5½% Conv. 1930*	100	93	8 7 0(a) 5 19 0(b)	8 12 9(a) 6 0 6(b)
China 4½% 1898	84	79½	5 15 5	7 9 6
China 5% Boxer 1925-47* ..	85½ Lon.	80½ Lon.	9 1 0(a) 6 8 5(b)	11 4 0(a) 7 10 0(b)
China 5% Reorganisation 1913	60	57	8 17 6	8 17 0

(a) Exchange at $3.46 to £. (b) Exchange at $4.86 to £1.
* These are gold loans payable in $ at par.

The Chinese loans are given in order of their charge upon the Customs Revenues which amounted last year to £19 millions.

* * *

Last month I was writing that there was no further danger of an Australian default. On the estimated trade balance and by virtue of the exchange pool in London, this statement holds good. Nevertheless, a technical default by New South Wales has been allowed to occur for political purposes. The new "National" Government of the Commonwealth desires to get rid of the extremist Mr. Lang from the Premiership of New South Wales. Mr. Lang has failed to introduce the agreed cuts in salaries and unemployment benefit and has allowed the New South Wales Budget deficit to exceed the prescribed limits. The Commonwealth Government refuses to advance New South Wales the balance of £500,000 required by Mr. Lang to meet interest due in London this week on the 6½% New South Wales 1930–40 loan and in New York on a dollar issue. If Mr. Lang's Government cannot carry on for lack of finance, it must resign and a General Election will be held in which his party will be routed. This is all very well as party politics but it seems strange that a National Government, elected to maintain Australian credit overseas, should inflict its foreign creditors with a default as one of its first moves in office. Mr. Scullin, who was so disliked for his Socialist views, at least paid Mr. Lang's bills on the due date.

COMPANY MEETING

MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

THE TRUE FUNCTION OF GOLD.

IMPORTANCE OF RESOLUTE POLICY.

MR. McKENNA ON THE OUTLOOK.

The Ordinary General Meeting of Shareholders of the Midland Bank Limited was held on Friday, January 29th, at Southern House, Cannon Street, London, E.C.

The Chairman (The Right Hon. R. McKenna) said: My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

There can be no question that Britain's breakaway from the gold standard was the outstanding financial event of 1931. For upwards of six years our monetary authorities fought a losing battle on ill-chosen ground. Looking back upon the long-drawn struggle we read a story of great and increasing sacrifice for a mistaken ideal. Happily the actual consequences of our abandoning gold have belied the terrible alarms expressed before the event. They have proved to be groundless, and indeed would never have been entertained had there been any general understanding of monetary problems and their relation to trade and employment.

Unfortunately most people have been content to regard these problems as exclusively the business of money market experts. They are wrong, however, in thinking them to be no concern of theirs. Monetary policy has a powerful and direct influence on the prosperity of each one of us, and if it is misdirected no one escapes the consequences.

WORKING OF THE GOLD STANDARD

The world has now got so far as to admit that the long-continued depression and universal economic unsettlement are due in part at least to the inefficient working of its monetary machinery. The time has gone by for the childlike belief that as long as a country is on the gold standard all is well. Harsh experience has shaken this faith rudely; we have found that returning to the gold standard did not in fact bring prosperity, and going off it did not entail ruin. So far from ruin, indeed, our present trade conditions are distinctly improved, and we are getting on at least as well without the gold standard as with it.

Down to the War the gold standard worked tolerably well. True, it by no means succeeded in maintaining a stable value of money measured in what the money will buy, but there was certainly never such cataclysmic instability as we have seen in the last two years. But clearly, the gold standard has not worked as it did in pre-War times, and the question arises: What has gone wrong with its post-War operation?

It is to be regretted that the indispensable conditions for operating the gold standard successfully have never been defined, nor apparently even consciously recognised. At the time when it was working more or less smoothly London was the only great free gold market. A very considerable surplus was due to this country on current international account, and this, if no steps had been taken to avert the natural consequence, would have been settled largely by imports of gold. Simple but adequate measures were, however, adopted by the Bank of England. If gold was coming to London in excess of our currency requirements the rate of interest was lowered and foreigners were encouraged to borrow from us. If, on the other hand, through excessive lending abroad, too much gold was being taken, the rate for money was raised; foreign borrowing was thereby discouraged, and the favourable balance of payments rapidly replenished our gold stock. Thus the surplus on current international account was used according to the needs of the time to reinforce our gold reserves or to provide accommodation for debtor countries to develop their economic resources.

CONDITIONS BEFORE THE WAR

For many years before the War this system was in regular operation. It will be noted that two psychological conditions were essential for its success. Had we been a hoarding nation, or had we been imbued with a spirit of financial isolation, the gold standard would never have worked successfully. Gold would have poured into the vaults of the Bank of England and remained there, not from any wish that this should happen, but because of unfavourable psychological conditions. In these circumstances the Bank of England would have anticipated the more or less involuntary experience of the central banks of America and France in accumulating vast stocks of bullion, and the rest of the world would have been as starved of gold as it is to-day.

It must be manifest to anyone who considers the subject that no metallic standard can remain operative if the great creditor nations act in such a way as to create a corner in the metal. The present distress is an acute manifestation of this process, and the question is inevitably asked whether gold is for ever to remain the standard of money value, however well or ill it is made to work.

Obviously the most rational answer to this question would seem to be that, if the gold standard cannot work without depressing and even ruining trade, the proper course must be to seek another and better one. I am afraid, however, that the financial authorities of the world, with their deep-rooted traditions and long-established practice, will not be easily moved to consider the question on its merits. There is still a profound conviction that the gold standard is the firmest basis for sound money, the surest protection against inflation, the best safeguard from political interference with national currencies by needy governments.

THE QUALITY OF "SOUND MONEY"

If the operation of the gold standard were properly controlled this conviction might be well founded, but as matters stand there is little or no justification for it. The claim that it provides protection against inflation is demonstrably false, for in less than twenty years before the War the world price level rose by roughly forty per cent., a marked example of inflation even with the gold standard in full operation. Again, what protection does the gold standard afford against a needy government which can abandon it whenever it chooses? We have seen too many instances in recent years to have any illusions on this point. The gold standard may have a protective quality when the sky is clear and there are no financial storms, but in times of peril and stress the protection vanishes.

Further, what is meant by the claim that the gold standard ensures the preservation of "sound money"? For my own part I am unable to attach any meaning to the phrase except that a "sound" unit of currency would always be of the same value measured in the aggregate of the things on which our money is spent. I think it can hardly be disputed that it would be of inestimable advantage if the pound always maintained the same purchasing power; in other words, if our internal price level remained constant. Viewed in this light, could any standard have failed more signally than has the gold standard in recent years?

Is it possible, then, with or without the gold standard, to maintain the pound at a constant value measured in internal purchasing power? If we are not frightened by the term "managed currency," and can harden ourselves to some degree of indifference to exchange fluctuations, there seems no reason to doubt the possibility. I do not know why we should be alarmed by the idea of a managed currency. The essential difference between a gold standard and a managed standard is a difference of objective. The instruments are precisely the same, the Bank rate and "open market operations," the second being a technical term for buying and selling bills or securities in the open market with the object of increasing or diminishing the quantity of money. These instruments have long been employed by the Bank of England, whose main objective hitherto, with a gold standard in operation, has necessarily been the maintenance of exchange stability, whereas with a managed standard the objective would be stability of the internal price level.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND

It is well recognised that the Bank of England, through the two instruments I have mentioned, has a high degree of control over the volume of credit and the rates currently charged for its use. Indeed, its control over the quantity of credit, and consequently of money, is as nearly absolute as anything can be in economic life, while the power of the Bank rate has been demonstrated on innumerable occasions ever since credit became an important element in our commercial system. With the aid of these controls it should not be an impossible task to maintain stability of the price level.

It seems, therefore, that the achievement of a high degree of stability in our domestic price level should present no insuperable difficulty. What in fact has happened in the last four months? Following almost immediately upon our going off the gold standard, the British wholesale price level rose about eight per cent., and since then has remained practically stationary; it is still slightly lower than a year ago, and nearly twenty per cent. below the figure for January, 1930. Our cost of living index, if we allow for seasonal changes, has scarcely moved; it is below the figure for January, 1931, and more than ten per cent. lower than a year earlier. There has been no inflation, and the supposed miracle of maintaining a currency stable in purchasing power without any metallic standard has been accomplished.

There is, then, no reason to regard the management of monetary conditions as an altogether novel departure, nor to see in it the grave dangers which might arise from lack of experience. It is equally true, I think, that public anxiety about exchange fluctuations is

(Continued on page 182.)

MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

(*continued from page 181.*)

unnecessarily exaggerated. If the pound retains a constant value measured in commodities, a rise or fall in foreign gold exchanges, temporary fluctuations apart, will only mark the degree in which gold has appreciated or depreciated, in other words the degree in which the gold standard has failed of its proper purpose in securing a stable value of money. In such circumstances the press might more logically remind us that the pound is always worth twenty shillings, and reckon the dollar and the franc as worth varying number of cents and centimes.

The Inescapable Choice

I conclude, then, that it is possible for long-term stability in the price level to be achieved by the exercise of monetary policy. But this does not necessarily mean that the gold standard should be permanently abandoned, for if a country off that standard can achieve stability of the price level, so also can countries on it, provided they act in concert. It is a mistake to suppose that the gold standard and a managed standard are mutually exclusive opposites. The widespread impression that the gold standard operates automatically is a complete delusion, for in fact it must always be in some degree managed so soon as bank credit plays a leading part in the business life of a community. The trouble is that hitherto the mere fact that the gold standard is established has induced among monetary authorities a false sense of security, leading them to limit management to the irreducible minimum. It is because the gold standard has been left too free to take its own course that the world has suffered the ill effects we are now experiencing.

Importance of Management

I believe we should all welcome a well-managed gold standard if we could get it. It is not management but the lack of it which has caused the failure of the gold standard. At present, however, and probably for some time to come, the practical alternative is between a gold standard badly managed and a pure managed currency without gold. Experience in the last few months has taught us what our choice should be. Events have shown conclusively that we cannot afford the gold standard of post-War times; it has become impossible for us because of unfavourable technical and psychological conditions. If these are incapable of control the gold standard will not work. On the other hand, there are advantages of practical convenience, by no means inconsiderable, in a gold standard well managed; and such a standard would be preferable to a pure managed currency, unless, as is hardly conceivable to-day, the management were conducted on an international basis. The immediate choice before this country is inescapable; either we must have a soundly managed gold standard, which can only be secured by well-ordered international action, or we must definitely abandon gold and rely on a managed standard without any metallic basis at all. In either event one thing is certain: the art of monetary management will have to be relied upon more and more to obviate such catastrophes in economic life as we are witnessing to-day. We must not delude ourselves once again into thinking that if we return to gold all will be well; renewed indulgence in that comfortable idea would be fatal. Deliberate, skilled and resolute monetary management, with or without gold, is a *sine qua non* of steady economic progress.

The Outlook

Mr. McKenna then dealt with the position of the Bank, and concluded as follows: In conclusion, when we look ahead we find the prospects more encouraging than a year ago. The proposals of the Government for a general tariff will certainly ensure the balancing of our Budget, and will even provide a surplus which may be advantageously used for the relief of the present uneconomic burden of excessive direct taxation. As far as British trade is concerned, the outlook is undoubtedly brighter now that we have established our independence of the continued decline in gold prices. World trade, however, on which we are largely dependent, is still under the influence of this decline, and no signs of its cessation have yet appeared. Nevertheless, the reversal of the trend must be daily brought nearer by the inability of the creditor countries to obtain payment in respect of their foreign claims. These receipts are an appreciable element in the French and American balances of current international transactions, and the time must be approaching, if it has not already arrived, when the presumed surplus on these accounts will have disappeared. As a consequence the effective monetary demand for gold is bound to diminish, and the result must be that gold, like any other commodity in the same circumstances, will decline in value. The outflow from Indian hoards, superimposed upon a fully maintained supply of newly mined gold, hastens the day when gold prices will begin to rise.

Behind and above all these economic tendencies is the necessity of securing a final and satisfactory solution of the problem of reparations and international war debts. In spite of temporary disappointments and set-backs, there are strong indications that the problem is steadily becoming better and more widely understood. The Hoover moratorium marked a great advance towards a fuller appreciation of the vital effects which these international claims exert upon the economic life of all countries. The world can never attain the level of prosperity justified by its own productive powers until this unhappy chapter of post-War history is finally closed.

The Report was adopted, other ordinary business was transacted, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

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Thursday, February 11th, at 8.30 p.m. MONEY, THE DESTROYER AND CREATOR, by Mr. W. T. Symons.

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January, 1932.

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